

Sheikh Saad leaves for Britain after surgery

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Sabah left for Britain on Monday to complete medical treatment after "successful" colon surgery in Kuwait last week, an official statement said. The statement by the emiri court, read on state television, said Sheikh Saad, born 1930, left for Britain to "continue medical treatment and for recuperation." Sheikh Saad, who has been prime minister and heir apparent since 1978, was rushed to a Kuwait City hospital on Tuesday after fainting due to internal bleeding. He was released on Thursday, but returned to hospital a day later. On Saturday Sheikh Saad underwent colon surgery.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily newspaper by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية للرأي

Crown Prince condemns settlements

LONDON (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday condemned the building of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and said that the building of these settlements contravenes Israel's commitment for achieving and safeguarding peace and coexistence in the Middle East. In an interview with the BBC Television, the Crown Prince said the United States' veto of any United Nations Security Council resolution will create an atmosphere of mistrust at the popular level in the region. He said that the credibility of the U.S. was adversely affected due to the latest veto of the Jerusalem resolution. Prince Hassan said that the visits of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to the United States and His Majesty King Hussein's upcoming visit to Washington should not be interpreted as an approval of the U.S. decision. Prince Hassan reiterated Jordan's support for the Palestinian leadership and people to their legitimate rights on their national soil, stressing the illegality of occupying Palestinian lands and describing Israel's annexation of Arab Jerusalem as contravening international legitimacy.

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Mordechai visits Jordan today

AMMAN (J.T.) — Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai pays a visit to Jordan today (Tuesday) for talks with His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on the Middle East peace process and bilateral relations. After the talks, Mr. Mordechai, who will be paying his first visit to the Kingdom, will also visit Petra, officials said.

Jordan, U.S. begin military exercises

AMMAN (API) — U.S. and Jordanian forces began military manoeuvres Monday that will involve helicopters and hundreds of soldiers in a desert in northeastern Jordan. The manoeuvres, which will last three weeks, are aimed at improving Jordan's military capability, officials said. Helicopters and possibly jet fighters from both sides will take part in the exercise, code-named "Early Victory '97," said General Mohammad Ababneh, the chief-of-staff of the air force. The manoeuvres will be held in the northeastern desert region of Hamra Hamad, 150 kilometres from Amman.

PNA frees Hamas military leader

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) released on Monday a Hamas military leader from prison and announced a full security review to allow the release of more jailed hardliners opposed to its self-rule deals with Israel. Ibrahim Al Mugadneh, resident of the Al Breij refugee camp, was released from prison in the Gaza Strip, sources close to the family told AFP.

PKK calls on Iraqi Kurds to join forces

DIYARBAKIR (AFP) — The outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) has called on Iraqi Kurd groups to join the PKK in a national liberation struggle for a Kurdish homeland. "Let us unify our forces for a national liberation struggle," said a statement read Sunday on MED-TV, a PKK-controlled station which broadcasts to Europe. "All the parties and groups need to reappraise the situation, including the civil war," said the statement referring to the three-year conflict between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in northern Iraq.

Cairo students burn Israeli flag

CAIRO (AFP) — Around 500 Cairo University students held a campus demonstration here Monday during which they set fire to the Israeli flag to protest the Jewish state's settlement policy, witnesses said. The students, who represent Islamic and Nasserite groups, demonstrated peacefully for about two hours while police surrounded the campus to prevent any violence, the witnesses said. The demonstrators chanted anti-Israeli slogans and slammed a decision by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approving the construction of a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem. They also vented their fury at the United Nations Security Council resolution demanding Israel abandon its plan and expressed their opposition to the normalisation of Arab-Israeli ties.

Is the Final Count Down
for the
Grand Opening
of
Y????????
Theme Restaurant & Bar

Palestinian negotiators quit en masse; Arafat says peace process facing a 'real crisis'

Abbas, others resign in protest against Israeli insistence on limiting redeployment and building Jewish settlement

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Palestinian negotiators resigned en masse Monday and Yasser Arafat warned the peace process was in "a real crisis" after Israel refused to expand a scheduled troop withdrawal from the West Bank.

The negotiators, led by top Arafat deputy Mahmoud Abbas, stormed out of a meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy late Sunday after the Israelis also stood firm on plans to build a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

"There is a real crisis, because this is a real breaching (by Israel) of what has been agreed upon," Mr. Arafat said Monday after Mr. Abbas and his team handed in a joint letter of resignation.

Mr. Abbas, who has been a key figure in Israeli-Palestinian contacts since their secret beginnings more than a decade ago, complained in the resignation letter that "Israel wants to dictate its own conditions" in the negotiations. "This is no way to negotiate," an official quoted Mr. Abbas as saying.

While speaking of crisis, Mr. Arafat did not immediately accept the resignations or announce a pullout from the negotiations, although the head of the Palestinian legislative council, Ahmad Qouriea, called for the talks to be suspended.

While some Palestinian officials hinted that violence would flare if Israel did not back down, notably over its settlement issue, Mr. Arafat kept a relatively low public profile.

He dispatched a senior member of the negotiating team, Saeb Erekat, to Amman with a "urgent message" for King Hussein (see separate story), and called a meeting for Monday night of the Central Committee of his Fateh movement to discuss the situation, officials said.

The Palestinian leadership also called on the United States and Russia, as co-sponsors of the peace process, to put pressure on Israel.

"The sponsors of the peace process must intervene to pressure Israel to stick to its agreements in order to end the crisis and preserve the continuation of the peace process," said Arafat aide Nabil Abu Rdaina.

Under signed peace agreements, Israel is obliged to carry out three further troop withdrawals from the West Bank over the next 18 months and Palestinians say each of the pullbacks should extend to their authority another 30 per cent of the territory.

But on Friday, Israel said it would in the first phase withdraw its troops from only an additional nine per cent of the West Bank, mostly in areas where the Palestinians already exercise civilian control.

Mr. Arafat branded the unilateral withdrawal offer a "trick and a conspiracy against the peace process."

At Sunday night's meeting, Mr. Abbas rejected the withdrawal offer and Israel in turn announced it was freezing the redeployment, which should have occurred over the weekend, pending a decision from

Mr. Arafat. Analysts said the new flare-up in tensions highlighted the fundamental lack of trust between Mr. Arafat and the right-wing Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

He came to office in last June pledging to slow the Palestinian autonomy process in order to better protect Israel's "security."

Mr. Netanyahu, who has faced a near revolt by right-wing hardliners in his government because of his willingness to hand even a limited amount of additional land to the Palestinians, appeared almost cheered by the Palestinians' outburst on Monday.

"They have finally realised that a nationalist government now holds power in Israel," he told members of his coalition Monday, according to Israel Radio.

The radio said government hardliners who had been threatening to withdraw their support from Mr. Netanyahu over the territorial issue, expressed support for Mr. Netanyahu in the latest face-off with Mr. Arafat.

Mr. Netanyahu later left for a previously scheduled visit to Moscow, where he was expected to face pressure from President Boris Yeltsin and other officials over the troop withdrawal and settlement issues.

But he left behind his top foreign policy advisor, Dore Gold, to deal with the Palestinians and Mr. Levy cancelled a planned trip to the United States this week because of the crisis, Israeli officials said.

Mr. Bouez said Mr. Moratinos' proposal needed to be studied and developed further.

Mr. Moratinos also met with Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri. He plans to see Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

"The EU is seeking a role complementary to the American role," he said in remarks published Monday by Beirut's Al Nahar daily.

Mr. Moratinos, a Spanish diplomat, was named special envoy in October as part of a bid by the 15-member EU to be more active in the peace process. He made his first Middle East tour in December.

The Europeans, who are big financial sponsors of Middle East programmes, want a political role commensurate with their economic role.

Palestinian minister Hanan Ashrawi told the Associated Press that Mr. Arafat "is facing a serious crisis, from Palestinian public opinion, from the legislative council, from the cabinet."

Ms. Ashrawi said Mr. Arafat was contacting Arab countries and the United States for help.

In Sunday's meeting, Mr. Abbas gave Mr. Levy "an official memo expressing the Palestinian non-acceptance" of the proposed Israeli pullback, Palestinian officials said.

The memo also asked the Israeli government to rescind its decision to build a large Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Clashes broke out Monday in Hebron — where 450 Jewish settlers live amid 120,000 Palestinians — after dozens of Palestinians tried to stop bulldozers from clearing a new road near the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba.

After Israeli police and soldiers began beating the protesters, several hundred Palestinians joined the melee, pelting the troops with stones. The scene calmed after Palestinian police officials arrived on the scene.

Five Palestinians were arrested. The Palestinians say the work was part of Israeli plans to lay a road from the settlement through the eastern part of Hebron to the city's main religious landmark, the Ibrahim Mosque.

Nearby residents fear the road will end up damaging houses next to the settlement.

(Continued on page 7)



A Palestinian armed with a stone and an Israeli soldier with a gun are restrained during clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinians trying to prevent the opening of a road for Jewish settlers in Hebron on Monday (Reuters photo)

Arafat sends Erekat with message to King Kabariti reiterates Jordan's support for Palestinian stand

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Monday reiterated Jordan's support to the Palestinians and the need to remove all barriers obstructing the progress of Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations, stressing the need for respect for all accords signed between the two sides, particularly the Jan. 15 accord on redeployment in the West Bank.

Mr. Kabariti also said that nothing should be done to change the status in the occupied Arab lands before the end of the final negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis.

The prime minister was speaking during a meeting with Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Minister for Local Government Saeb Erekat, who handed him a message from Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to His Majesty King Hussein on the latest developments in the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations and the outcome of the talks between Palestinian and Israeli negotiators on Israeli redeployment in the West Bank.

Speaking to Jordan Television after the meeting Mr. Erekat said that he discussed the situation in the occupied lands with Mr. Kabariti.

"The Palestinians and Jordanians are in the same trench. They both have similar feelings towards the crises facing the peace process due to Israeli practices," he said.

"Jordan will do everything in its power to support the Palestinian leadership and people at all levels, particularly as His Majesty King Hussein is embarking on a visit to the United States," he added.

"There is nothing wrong with the peace negotiations but what is wrong is the Israeli practices," he said. "What needs to be stopped now is the building of settlements, the confiscation of lands and the demolition of homes, the Judaisation of Jerusalem. We as Palestinians want to continue the peace process, and if the Israelis try to turn the negotiations into dictation, they will be responsible for pushing not only Palestinians and Israelis but also the whole region to a disastrous confrontation."

Palestinian offices asked to close are not related to PNA — lawyer

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Four Palestinian offices in Arab East Jerusalem ordered closed by Israel are not connected to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) as Israel claims, a Palestinian attorney told Israeli police officials on Monday.

Last week's closure order incensed Palestinians, at a time when tensions are already high over the construction of a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem and disagreement over the size of an Israeli land handover in the West Bank.

Jawad Boulos met Monday with officials from Israel's public security ministry in an effort to keep the offices open.

Mr. Boulos was to submit a

written argument to the ministry by Tuesday, the ministry said in a statement.

"Following a review of the additional material, the public security minister will decide whether there is reason not to implement the warnings," it said.

Mr. Boulos said that if the ministry insists on closing the offices, he will appeal to Israel's supreme court.

Mr. Boulos said some of the offices oppose Jewish settlements and want to increase the Arab presence in Jerusalem, but "there is nothing wrong in such goals and it not mean they are directly related to the Palestinian (National) Authority," he told the Associated Press.

He called the closure order a "politically motivated decision."

by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in an effort to appease hard-liners.

The four offices ordered closed are used by the Jerusalem Welfare and Development Society, the national and Islamic Committee to Confront Settlements, the Land Committee, and the Public Institutions Bureau.

Israel claims that the 1995 interim agreement on Palestinian autonomy limits PNA activities to self-rule areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Police posted warning orders on the offices on Wednesday, giving them 96 hours to shut down or face forced closure. The deadline was extended until Monday to enable Mr. Boulos to present his appeal.

Fighting rages in Sudan after rebels claim gains

KHARTOUM (Agencies) — Fighting was raging between rebels and government troops in southern Sudan on Monday, a day after the insurgents said they had seized two towns on the Ugandan border.

"The fighting is continuing," Yasser Arman, a spokesman for the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) said from Asmara, Eritrea. "We are continuing our advance and we expect the town of Yei to fall at any moment." Yei is 150 kilometres southwest of the regional capital, Juba. On Sunday,

Mr. Arman said the rebels had also seized the towns of Kaya and Gumuli on the border with Uganda.

General Mohammad Al Sanousi Ahmad, spokesman for the Sudanese armed forces, confirmed the fighting at a press briefing here.

"As of two o'clock this afternoon the fighting was going on and our troops were fighting fiercely and courageously," he said.

He repeated accusations made Sunday that Uganda was involved in the attacks on Kaya, and the towns of Bazi and Morobo on the

borders of Uganda and Zaire, a charge Kampala has denied.

Gen. Ahmad suggested former Sudanese Premier Sadeq Al Mahdi was involved in planning the attacks on the towns, noting that "the acts of aggression came on the heels of a visit by Mahdi to Uganda."

He added that Mr. Mahdi left Uganda after a meeting with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and SPLA leader John Garang, who, he said, remained behind until the beginning

(Continued on page 7)



DEMAND FOR PRISONER RELEASE: Palestinian women hold the pictures of their sons detained in an Israeli jail during a sit-in held in front of the Palestinian Legislative Council in Gaza City on Monday. According to the peace agreements signed between Israelis and Palestinians, Israel was supposed to release the prisoners but has delayed the move, prompting hundreds of Palestinian women to demand the release of their sons, brothers and fathers (AFP photo)

Kurdish rivals to hold talks

ANKARA (AFP) — A steering committee set up as part of a ceasefire agreement between rival Iraqi Kurd factions will hold its first meeting here on Tuesday, a foreign ministry spokesman said on Monday.

The meeting will be attended by representatives of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) as well as the Turcoman Front, spokesman Sermet Atacani said.

The Turcomans, Iraqis of Turkish origin, were included as a neutral element in the talks after pressure from Ankara.

On the agenda will be moves to reestablish ties between the two factions, creation of a technical committee to facilitate aid activities and freedom of movement as well as health, education and transport matters, said Mr. Atacani.

The parties are also due to meet Turkish Foreign Ministry officials and U.S. State Department official Robert Deutsch, who is due in Ankara on Monday.

Representatives of the PUK and KDP have met three times in Ankara since October in a bid to reach a peace accord in northern Iraq, where factional fighting has killed some 2,500 people since May 1994.

The two factions agreed to a ceasefire on October 23 under pressure from the United States but each has been accusing the other of violating the accord.

Fighting flared in late August when the KDP, supported by Iraqi troops, seized the main town of Erbil from the PUK and then pushed east toward the Iranian border.

Holy See and Libya set up diplomatic ties

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican, despite U.S. reservations, established diplomatic relations Monday with Libya.

The Vatican said it was satisfied that Libya, led by Muammar Qadhafi, had taken steps to protect freedom of religion and that the development could help the Holy See play a role in bringing peace and stability to the Mediterranean region.

Last month, the Vatican confirmed that it was negotiating to forge ties with Libya, which Washington accuses of sponsoring "international terrorism."

"With the establishment of diplomatic ties with Libya, the Holy See intends to recognise the positive results obtained, with the cooperation of the Libyan authorities, in the sphere of freedom of religion," said Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls.

The Vatican's relations with Tripoli have been strained in the past by Libya's treatment of the Roman Catholic community, which numbers about 50,000 in the country.

In 1986, an Italian bishop who lives in Tripoli, Giovanni Martinelli, was detained for 10 days, along with four priests and a nun, by the Qadhafi regime. The detentions came during high tension between Libya and the West over the U.S. bombing earlier that year of

Tripoli.

The new diplomatic relationship promises to encourage "the friendship and cooperation between Christians and Muslims of that nation," the Vatican spokesman said.

In addition, with the new ties, "the Holy See desires as well to take part in giving a special impulse to political dialogue," Mr. Navarro-Valls said, adding: "It is important that the southern shore of the Mediterranean becomes ever more a region of peace, stability and security."

U.S. officials, speaking on the grounds of anonymity, said last week that Washington had not been trying to dictate to the Vatican, but that it had made clear its reservations about the Holy See's move to formalise ties.

The U.S. embassy to the Vatican said it was informed in advance of Monday's announcement about the establishment of ties.

Pope John Paul II named his apostolic nuncio in Malta, Archbishop Jose Sebastian Laboa, to serve in the same post in Libya.

The Pope also named the Rev. Sylvester Carmel Magro, a Franciscan now posted in Tripoli, to serve as apostolic vicar in Benghazi, Libya's second largest city.

Demirel cautions Turkish military against politics

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel warned Monday in an apparent message to Islamists against the pro-secular army being drawn into the political crisis sparked by a plan to crack down on religious extremists.

"The military should not be drawn into political discussions ... or be forced to make political statements," Mr. Demirel said in an interview with the local media.

His warning came following a communique issued Saturday by the army, which reiterated its commitment to democracy and denied criticism that it had been using powers beyond its constitutionally defined role.

"The Turkish armed forces is extremely sensitive in determining the limits of its authority and responsibilities," it said.

Mr. Demirel defended the army communique saying that it was justified considering rumours about a coup d'etat.

He also denounced Islamist publications for writing negatively about the army.

"Some Islamist dailies slander the army on a regular basis," Mr. Demirel said. "This must stop."

His statement came amid a bitter row between Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan and the military-dominated national security council (MGK) over a 20-point plan aimed at putting a stop to rising religious extremism.

The deputy leader of Mr. Erbakan's pro-Islamic Welfare Party said on Saturday that the government may not implement the 20-point plan raised at a meeting of the MGK on Feb. 28 although Mr. Erbakan later signed it.

"There is no obligation for the government to implement the MGK resolutions (which includes the military plan to curb creeping Islamisation) as they are," said Riza Ulucak in a new challenge against the army.



RARE PIECE: A close-up view of a newly discovered ancient statue of a woman carrying children on her lap is displayed during a news conference in Cairo on Monday. The 3,000-year-old inlaid statue is of unusual design and believed to be rare and ranked in quality with some of the best pieces in the Egyptian museum (Reuters photo)

Iran, Syria engage in military cooperation

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran is to help Syria to modernise its military technology as part of a general defence cooperation agreement between the two countries, Iranian Defence Minister Mohammad Foruzandeh said Monday.

Mr. Foruzandeh, who visited Syria last month, told the English-language daily Tehran Times that the agreements "will determine the future defense cooperation" between the two countries. "Iran is to cooperate with Syria in modernising its military facilities," he said without giving further details.

The Iranian official, however, praised Syria's military potential, saying the country's army was equipped with "the latest defence technology."

Iran considers Syria as its main strategic ally in the Middle East.

Mr. Foruzandeh also said the two countries had pledged to support resistance against Israeli occupation of Arab land. "We agreed on curbing any further aggression by Zionist occupiers," he added. Iran said last month its defence minister's visit to Syria was aimed at "strengthening strategic cooperation."

Russian official due in Syria

A top official with a

state-owned Russian weapons and military equipment company is expected in Syria later this week to discuss possible sales, a diplomat said Monday.

General Mikhail Timkin is due to hold talks on Friday with senior Syrian officials about issues "linked to the company's business," the source said.

Military experts arrived last week in Syria to prepare for Mr. Timkin's week-long visit.

The Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz reported last week that Russia has agreed to a Syrian request to upgrade its armed forces, saying Damascus had identified three priority areas for modernisation — air defences, army and air force.

In April 1994, Syria and Russia signed an accord enabling Moscow to resume arms sales to Syria after they were suspended in 1991 following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The diplomatic source also said Syria's \$10 billion debt with Russia would be up for discussion when a Russian economic delegation visits in April.

The positions of the two sides are close and there is a willingness to cancel about 80 per cent of the debt, which is owed for arms purchases from the former Soviet Union.

NEWS IN BRIEF

UAE reconnects phone lines to Iraq

DUBAI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has reestablished direct phone lines with Iraq for the first time since Baghdad invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the state telecommunications company Etisalat said Monday. The lines were connected on Thursday, the company said, which published a list of 19 towns and regions in Iraq that can now be called from the UAE, along with tariffs. Baghdad, Basra, Dohuk, Kirkuk, Karbala, Al Najaf, Ninive, Ramadi, Tikrit are among the cities and towns listed, along with Erbil and Sulaymaniyah in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq. Calls originating from Baghdad, however, remain cut, according to telephone customers in the Iraqi capital. Except for Oman, all the other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE and Qatar, cut direct calls to Iraq after it invaded fellow GCC member Kuwait. Calls could, however, still be made to Iraq through the operator. Qatar reconnected direct phone lines with Iraq after the two countries reestablished diplomatic relations in 1992.

Silk Route travellers arrive in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Five explorers travelling with a caravan of camels along the legendary Silk Route linking East and West have arrived in northeastern Iran, newspapers reported Monday. The five have been on the road for the past nine months on the famous trade route linking China and Turkey. The route was the key to prosperity and economic power in this part of the world until the 17th century. The three Turks, an Uzbek and an American have handed messages from Turkish President Suleiman Demirel to the heads of states they have crossed. In Tehran, a similar note will be forwarded to Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in an official ceremony. The messages written on goatskins contain calls for "friendship and cooperation" between the countries situated along the route, according to the group's spokesman, Aref Ashjeh. Mr. Ashjeh said several camels in their caravan had perished from fatigue since their departure from China. The American traveller is a student of Islamic studies in a university in Istanbul. Iran and Turkmenistan inaugurated a 165-kilometre railway on their common border last May, completing the last missing link in the new Silk Route.

Iraq plans general census this year

CAIRO (AP) — Iraq announced on Monday that it will conduct a general census during the third quarter of this year. The official Iraqi News Agency quoted the head of the planning commission, Hassan Abdul Munim, as saying the census will be expanded to include information about housing units, commercial buildings, agriculture property, distribution of the work force and other social factors. The last census, conducted in 1987 when Iraq was at war with Iran, put the country's population at more than 16 million. The current estimate is above 20 million. Iraq's population 70 years ago, according to the first census, was less than 3 million. The agency, which was monitored in Cairo, did not say how the census will be carried out in three Kurdish-controlled cities in the north or in the country's southern marshes, where dissident Shiites take refuge.

Bahrain sends aid to Iran quake victims

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) — Bahrain on Monday sent food and clothes to Iran to help the victims of last week's devastating earthquake. Mubarak Al-Jahadi, executive director of Bahrain's Red Crescent Society, said that a ship left Mina Salman port with containers carrying nearly 70 tonnes of food and clothing. The donations were made in response to appeals from Iran at the direction of the island's ruler, Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, the official Gulf News Agency said. The shipment will reach Iran's Bandar Abbas port in about two days, Mr. Hadi said. Iran has received more than \$1.6 million in cash and other donations from Norway, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Japan, Germany, Switzerland, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries and various U.N. agencies. The earthquake in northwestern Iran measured 6.1 on the Richter scale and killed nearly 1,000 people according to official estimates. Aid workers suspect the figure is closer to 3,000. Scores of villages have been destroyed, and survivors have had to cope with cold and windy winter weather.

Omani air force chief to visit Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Oman's air force chief Mohamad Ben Mahfouz Al Arezi is due to visit here on Tuesday to discuss boosting political and military ties with Iran, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported Monday. Mr. Mahfouz is to hold talks with Iranian Defence Minister Mohammad Foruzandeh and army officials, it said. His visit is aimed at strengthening "friendship and political and military ties," the agency added. Oman has good relations with Iran and is the only Gulf state to maintain military links with Iran. An Omani warship visited the southern Gulf port of Bushehr in June 1995 for the first time since Iran's 1979 revolution.

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14:05 Cartoon — Budgie-The Little Helicopter
14:30Grimmy
15:00French Programmes
16:00Super Sports Folies
16:30Dog House
17:00 Preserving for the Taste of it
17:15Album Show
18:00French Programmes
19:30News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Murphy Brown
20:00Super Stars of Action
20:30Encounter
21:10The Nature of Things
22:00News in English
22:25Snowy River
23:00Mission Impossible

PRAYER TIMES

04:31Fajr
05:48(Sunrise) Doha
11:46Dhuhr
15:07Asr
17:44Maghreb
19:00Isha

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Assemblies of God Church
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St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
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Queen arrives in France to inaugurate 'Jordanian Season'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor arrived Monday for a two-day visit to launch the Jordanian Season in France, a Royal Court statement said.

The season, which grew out of conversations over the past few years between Queen Noor and Bernadette Chirac, to introduce Jordanian contemporary art, handicrafts and history to the French and European public, will extend from March 11 until December and include various cultural, scientific and intellectual programmes.

The "Voyage en Jordanie" exhibition at the Hotel de Ville, which the Queen and Mme. Chirac are to inaugurate Tuesday, will exhibit the works of contemporary Jordanian artists, antiquities, a selection of Palestinian and Jordanian traditional dresses, carpets and objects from the famous collection of Widad Kawar of Jordan as well as an exhibition of photographs of Petra taken by various French photographers since the mid-1800s.

There will also be nine 6th-7th century mosaic friezes from churches in Jerash and Khirbet Al Samra, the statement said.

The following day, the Queen and Mme. Chirac will open an exhibition of Jordanian handicrafts at the famous Le Printemps store, which will also include a selection of traditional Palestinian and Jordanian dresses.

The Noor Al Hussein Foundation's Jordan Design and Trade Centre worked with Le Printemps to organise this exhibition of handicraft products of various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the country, the statement said.

Between June and October, the Institut du Monde Arabe will host an exhibition entitled "Jordanian Archaeology: Science at the Service of History."

This will include reconstructions of excavations of major archaeological sites in Jordan, and will highlight excavation and analysis techniques. These will cover the Paleolithic, Persian, Hellenic, Biblical, Roman, Nabataean, Byzantine and Umayyad periods and will demonstrate how science has been used to protect, restore, and understand what has been bequeathed to us from past civilisations.

The exhibition will contain the Dead Sea Copper Scrolls from Qumran that were discovered during excavations of caves around the north-western shores of the Dead Sea, beginning in 1949 after the first scrolls were discovered by bedouins in a cave there. It will also include the unique Ain Ghazal statues, which date back 9,000 years ago and are considered to be the oldest human sculptures in the world.

Later in the year, the Maison de Cultures du Monde will host performances of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation's National Music Conservatory.

In addition, there will also be political and economic colloquiums, organised by Le Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche sur le Moyen Orient Contemporain (CERMOC) at the Institut du Monde Arabe as well as an economic colloquium organised by the Jordanian Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Jordanian Investment Promotion Company, the Jordanian Business Association and the Centre National du Patronat Français.

Queen Noor, who was accompanied by Senator Leila Sharaf and her advisors In'am Mufti and Lina Toukan, was received by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Saleh Irsheidat, Jordanian Ambassador Sharif Fawaz Sharaf and Mrs. Sharaf and French Ambassador Bernard Bajelet.

Seminar covers women's status in the media

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — With the themes of justice, liberty and trust, a two-day workshop entitled "Women's Status in the Media" convened Monday.

Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi, who opened the event at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), criticised some of the media in his opening speech, stating: "I question as to why some of the press still insists on using women's bodies as a mean of marketing and earning profit."

"I also do not see how some could believe that women should be looked at as simply reproductive warehouses or mere home servants," the mayor said.

Dr. Abbadi also expressed his sorrow over continuous violent practices against women such as murdering women in the name of honour, a practice which he described as stemming from the Jahiliyyah days (the era before Islam).

He added that the media bears part of the responsibility, and should not publish or strengthen some of these antiquated concepts.

President of the Women's Committee at the Jordan Press Association (JPA) Mahassen Imam stated that women's organisations should collaborate with each other in order to improve women's collective status.

"Our first step was building bridges with the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) as our goals and responsibilities are similar and we have a long and difficult path to achieve liberty and obtain our full rights in all fields," she said.

JWU President Asma Khader also reviewed several existing laws which are considered to discriminate against women, such as the civil law, the passport law and others.

"In order for us to celebrate "Women's International Day, we must work on ending all forms of violence and discrimination against women," she stated.

Two reports were presented in the morning by former information ministers, Ma'en Abu Nuwar, who presented a paper entitled "Women journalists in the year 2000: reality and perspectives," and Jawad Anani who presented a paper entitled "The media institution and their role in



Amman Mayor Abbadi addresses a conference dealing with women's participation and representation in the media (Petra photo)

improving women's status."

In the evening, Musa Azri, from the Jordan News Agency, Petra, presented a paper entitled "The media institution and its role in improving women's status," while Jumana Mjall from Jordan Radio and Television presented a paper on "The reality and picture of women in Jordanian radio."

The conference was organised by the JWU and the women's committee at the JPA.

Engineers lauded for distinguished work

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday conferred medals on two Jordanian engineers for their distinguished work in the construction of the new Palace of Justice inaugurated last November in Abdali district.

King Hussein conferred Al Kawkab Medal of the Third Order on Amjad Abu Aishah, a contractor for the Mohammad Ahmad Company, and the Independence Medal of the Third Order on Hani Sunnaa, the director of the project. The medals were presented to the engineers by Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Hadi Majali at the minister's office.

Addressing a ceremony in the engineers' honour, Mr. Majali said that the Palace of Justice was built in traditional Islamic style and was a remarkable edifice that reflects the skills of its designers and builders.

The medal recipients voiced their gratitude to the King and said that such a Royal honour is the pride of all those who were involved in the construction of the building.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that Amman's 11 courts, currently occupying space in different parts of city, will soon relocate to the new JD 14 million building.

The seven storey structure has a total area of 47,000 square metres and is adjoined by different facilities and a large parking area.

The courts to be relocated are the Courts of the First Instance, Magistrate, Customs, Land, State-owned Estates, Amman Municipality Income Tax, and Criminal, as well as Appeals, Cassation and the Higher Court of Justice.

Czech girls choir to perform twice more

AMMAN (J.T.) — Severáček, the Czech girls choir, which performed in Amman last night at the Prince Hassan Auditorium of the University of Jordan, will hold two more performances tomorrow and Thursday.

The choir, with nearly 40 years of history in entertaining audiences in the Czech Republic and abroad, will sing at the Prince Hassan Auditorium at 11:00 a.m. and Thursday at 6:30 p.m. for the general public at the Moses Memorial Church at Mount Nebo.

Their repertoire includes children's and folk songs of various nations, spiritual music from choruses of the renaissance, baroque, classical and romantic periods, and modern compositions by Palestrina, Bach, Mysliveček, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Smetana, Dvorak, Prokofiev, Britten, and contemporary Czech composers Eben, Hurnik, Raichle and Novak.

Severáček has produced several records and CDs, radio broadcasts and television shows. The girls also perform with the opera in their hometown of Liberec.

Many Czech professional singers, instrumentalists and music teachers gained their first experience in music singing with Severáček. In fact, Severáček is more than one choir: there are three preparatory choirs with a total of approximately 180 children, a concert choir of around 90 children and a girls chamber choir of 24 15-19-year-olds. The former is the one that will perform at Mount Nebo.

The choir is led by conductors Milan Uherek, who together with his wife founded Severáček in 1958, and Lukás Cerný.

The performance is presented by the National Music Conservatory of Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the Czech embassy in Amman, in cooperation with Radisson SAS Hotel Amman (the Philadelphia Hotel).

Officials attempt to combat illicit lottery schemes

By Tanya Habjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Anti-Corruption Department (ACD) has announced plans to combat "fraud and swindling" by intercepting incoming and outgoing lottery mail, ACD officials said Monday.

Combining efforts with the Ministry of Post and Communications, the ACD will seize mail with obvious connections to lottery companies from abroad and hold it at the ministry, they said.

"We are trying to eliminate this problem, hundreds of letters are still arriving," an ACD official, requesting anonymity, told the Jordan Times.

According to officials, the majority of lottery and raffle tickets which Jordanians have been purchasing of late are part of large scam that has cost citizens millions.

Lottery participants must write their name, address, and bank account number on the ticket, transfer a sum of JD 5, and in some cases more, to the player whose name appears in the first box of the ticket, and finally transfer an additional sum to the sponsoring company's bank account.

The player will then receive three tickets which he must sell, each with his name in the first box, thus continuing the game and receiving back the amount spent on the ticket.

"During our investigations we have not found one lottery winner," the ACD official said. "Where is the money going?" Most of the lottery offices were operating illicitly, without the anterior endorsement of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, he added.

Jordanian law requires that lottery offices both establish permanent headquarters and procure the endorsement of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, an informed source said.

"Our law forbids the exploitation of people, and as a branch of the government we must protect these citizens," the official said. "Seven of these unlawful offices in the Kingdom have been closed."

Acting on the complaint of a Jordanian who received a lottery form from abroad, the ACD escalated their investigation and resolved to intercept lottery advertisements and hold them both at the post office and the Ministry of Post and Communications, he explained.

"We then call the people to whom the letters were addressed and inform them that they may come and pick up their money or letter," the official maintained. "When they come to retrieve their mail we inform them of the likelihood of a scam."

When the Jordan Times questioned ACD officials as to whether they had the right to intercept mail and judge whether citizens should or should not participate, these same officials described their mandate "as a necessary evil to protect those citizens who are being cheated."

While the ACD has managed to close lottery offices, operating illegally, many people are replicating tickets in an attempt to recover lost money, the official said.

The ACD also plans on combating the "scam" through media announcements, he concluded.

Egyptians unlawfully working in Kingdom given grace period to legalise status or return home

AMMAN (J.T.) — Egyptian workers have until the end of May to obtain legal work permits in Jordan, otherwise they must leave the Kingdom immediately, Minister of Labour Abdul Hafez Shakhaneh announced Monday.

Speaking upon his return to Amman from a Cairo meeting organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Dr. Shakhaneh explained that the new arrangement was ratified during talks with Egyptian authorities.

These authorities asserted that tens of thousands of Egyptian citizens, currently living in Jordan, have demonstrated a desire to return home but are unable to do so as heavy fines are levied for staying in the Kingdom longer than their visits legally sanctioned, the minister told the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

He affirmed that agreement was reached with the authorities in Cairo to grant these workers a grace period, ending May 31, to leave the country without financial penalty.

However, subsequent to that date, the Jordanian government will take measures to evict workers without valid documents from Jordan.

Dr. Shakhaneh had told the Jordan Times last month that an estimated 280,000 Egyptians work in Jordan, the majority of which, he stated, do so unlawfully.

Among the measures discussed and ratified with the Egyptian government was the prohibition of Egyptians in travel to Jordan unless they hold valid work permits obtained through the Jordanian Labour Ministry and approved by the Egyptian embassy in Amman, he said.

Dr. Shakhaneh added that Egyptians passing in transit through Jordan to a third country, including Saudi Arabia for the pilgrimage, should hold supporting documents for their trip as well as return tickets.

The Egyptian authorities will announce these measures to Egyptians planning to travel abroad as well as those currently living in Jordan, he said.

Maize to be retested

By Ghalia Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The 50,000 tonnes of maize, judged to be contaminated two weeks ago, will undergo a second round of tests, Minister of Supply Munir Sobar told the Jordan Times Monday.

The minister said the maize, imported from the United States at the cost of approximately JD 8 million, was found to be contaminated with bacteria.

However, he added, a committee, representing the ministries of supply and agriculture and the Jordanian Institution for Standardisation and Metrology, was formed to conduct the second round of tests to confirm that the produce is indeed unfit for consumption.

"If the maize is proved contaminated, the ministry will return it to the United States," Mr. Sobar said. "However, if it is proved fit for animal consumption, we will allow it to be sold in the market."

He denied reports accusing the ministry of selling contaminated maize to farmers and stressed that the produce in question is still in Aqaba, and that the maize available at the ministry's warehouses is "completely fit for consumption."

"The amount stored in our warehouses was tested and proved fit for animal consumption," the minister asserted.

Al Dustour Arabic daily yesterday quoted official sources as saying that the ministry recently stopped granting import licences to merchants "in an attempt to force them to buy the huge amount of maize available at its warehouses in instalments."

The minister told the Jordan Times that the private sector was previously allowed to import maize, but stated that merchants took advantage of the situation to sell the cereal at lower prices, causing the ministry "huge losses."

The ministry, Mr. Sobar asserted, lowered maize prices from JD 160 per tonne to JD 140 per tonne in line with international market prices.

"But the private sector undersold the ministry," he said.

"This resulted in a surplus of maize in the ministry's storehouses, prompting us to halt private sector imports until the quantity is sold," Mr. Sobar added.

"We will allow merchants to import maize in two months after we sell all the amount stored in our warehouses," he added.

Two men expected to have been executed at dawn today

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two men are expected to have been executed at dawn today at Swaga prison for the attempted rape and murder of two women in separate incidents in 1996 and 1992, according to judicial sources.

The executions will be the first to be implemented in the Kingdom since the beginning of the year.

One of the convicted men, Abdul Fatah Mustafa, 24, was sentenced to death in November 1996 for the murder and attempted rape of Iman Yassin, a physician at the Islamic Hospital, on Aug. 11 of that year in the Tla'a Al Ali area of Amman.

Court documents stated that Mr. Mustafa, a former guard and maintenance worker at the Fardous Housing Complex, where the victim resided, monitored her apartment with the intention of sexually assaulting her "even if he had to kill her."

On the night of the murder, court transcripts said, Mr. Mustafa consumed alcohol, broke into Dr. Yassin's apartment and attempted to rape her.

A struggle ensued between the two, the woman started to scream and Mr. Mustafa strangled her, the court said.

Mr. Mustafa, who confessed and re-enacted his crime, retracted his earlier confessions and told the court in October that his intent was not to kill the woman but was, rather, taken by surprise.

The father of the victim refused to drop charges in court and instead asked that Mr. Mustafa be hanged in public in front of Al Hussein Mosque in downtown Amman.

The second man, expected to be executed is Saleh Abu Sidreh, 27, who was sentenced to death by the Criminal Court in July of 1996 for killing Aysheh Ghawanmeh, 17, in the pastures of Marka Shamalia area.

According to court documents, the convicted who was a shepherd knew the victim, also a shepherd, and as their relationship developed he promised to marry her.

On the morning of the murder, court transcripts said, Mr. Abu Sidreh met with the woman in the pasture and started making sexual advances and kissing her.

Ms. Ghawanmeh started struggling and fighting Mr. Abu Sidreh, who pinned her to the ground in an attempt to rape her, the court said.

"She managed to escape from his grasp and started running and screaming for help, but Mr. Abu Sidreh followed her, drew a knife and stabbed her several times while she was running and begging for her life, until she fell to the ground," the court said.

Minutes later, another shepherd, Suleiman Juma, a friend of Mr. Abu Sidreh, passed by and saw the woman lying on the ground in a pool of blood.

"Mr. Abu Sidreh threatened his friend and held a knife to his throat, stating that he would kill him if he informed anyone," the court said.

Three years later, the court added, Mr. Juma informed the cousin of the victim of the incident, who informed the authorities.

He was booked on Apr. 30, 1995, confessed to authorities and re-enacted his crime.

An autopsy performed on Ms. Ghawanmeh's body indicated that she was stabbed eight times.

The court said that it relied on the testimony of the convicted man as well as Mr. Juma's testimony in court.

A Royal Decree was recently issued approving both death sentences.

Last year, a total of 10 people were executed in Jordan for various crimes by the Criminal Court.

What's Going On

FIFTH THEATRE FESTIVAL

* Two plays entitled "The Revolt of the Blacks" and "Head of Mamluk Jaber" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 respectively

FILM

* British film "Far Voices" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

CONCERT

* Performance by Severáček Girls Choir at the University of Jordan, Al Hassan Ben Talal Auditorium on Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. (for schools only).

LECTURES

* "Functional Aspects of the Lute in the Frescos of Qasr Amra" by Dr. Ricardo Eichmann at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 6:30 p.m. (Tel. 696682).
* The Projected Jordanian-European Partnership Agreement by Dr. Nabil Ammari at the Orthodox Club, Abdoun at 7:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* A UNHCR photo exhibition by Brazilian/French photographer Sebastiao Salgado at Forte Grand Hotel, until March 15.

* Works by Paris-based Syrian artist Ziad Dalloul at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 3. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.

* Sculptures by Zaki Sallam at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 687598), until March 15.

Zaire rebels: Kisangani surrounded 'negotiations must precede ceasefire'

WALIKALE, Zaire (Agence) — Zairian rebels said Monday they had closed in from three sides on the key government-controlled city of Kisangani, and that they will not stop fighting until President Mobutu Sese Seko begins negotiations.

"The city of Kisangani is now surrounded by five columns of soldiers from the north, the south and the east," rebel spokesman Nyembwe Kazadi, speaking from Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, said. "We left the corridor to the west open for civilians and Zairian soldiers to flee."

Kisangani, spreading on two sides on the Zaire River, had not been encircled from all four sides, and the rebels would make it difficult to do so.

Earlier, the rebel radio Voice of the People, broadcasting from the eastern city of Gombe on the border with Rwanda, said the soldiers were fleeing the city.

Kisangani is one of the largest cities in the Central African country, with an international airport, and has served as the army's local headquarters for an unsuccessful counter-offensive against the six-month insurgency.

Mr. Kazadi said wealthy residents had been charter-

ing planes from the government-controlled Zaire express to fly them out of Kisangani.

He said units of Zairian soldiers and mercenaries, most of them Serbs, were still inside the city. "So far, they haven't reacted," he said.

There was no independent confirmation of the rebel claim. All U.N. and private aid workers withdrew from Kisangani two weeks ago.

The rebels of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire have given a March 13 deadline for government soldiers to desert the army and join their ranks. Otherwise they are to be considered "traitors."

Although Mr. Mobutu has backed a U.N.-designated ceasefire proposal to end the rebels' advance, Mr. Kazadi said Sunday that talks had to come before the fighting would stop.

"We won't stop the war until we begin negotiations," he said. "We have to sit down and negotiate any ceasefire."

Since September, the rebels have captured a 1,450-kilometre swath of eastern Zaire. Their main demand is that Mr. Mobutu, who during 31 years of corrupt and dictatorial rule has left most

of Zaire's people impoverished, must resign. They have consistently said face-to-face negotiations with Mr. Mobutu must come before a ceasefire.

On Saturday, Dutch Development Minister Jan Pronk met rebel leader Laurent Kabila in Goma and said he had agreed to accept a U.N. plan for a ceasefire.

As the rebels waited outside Kisangani, Mr. Kazadi said they were providing safe passage to Rwandan Hutu refugees fleeing the fighting.

"Those that came back to us are in good hands," he said. "We are committed to providing safe corridors."

Many of the refugees in the region are Rwandan Hutus who fled their country fearing reprisals for the 1994 state-sponsored slaughter in that country of a half-million people, most of them minority Tutsis.

In Nairobi, Kenya, World Food Programme spokeswoman Michele Quintaglio said refugees fleeing the Tingi-Tingi camp, which the rebels took March 1, were continuing to arrive in Ubundu, 95 kilometres south of Kisangani. The camp held 170,000 refugees when it was overtaken by the rebels.

A U.N. team flew to the

almost abandoned refugee camp Sunday.

Several hundred people, some of them children, had been left behind in the camp, according to a report by British Broadcasting Corp.

U.N. officials said the people left behind had been the old, the young and the sick.

In Paris, French Emergency Humanitarian Aid Minister Xavier Emmanuelli issued an "alert" Monday over the situation of tens of thousands of refugees fleeing rebels in a camp in eastern Zaire.

Speaking after a visit to the Ubundu camp he said the refugees faced death through starvation, illness or at the hands of rebel killers if they did not receive aid urgently.

"Without organised and secure aid men, women and children are condemned to die of hunger, exhaustion, illness or be killed by those who have been chasing them for more than three months," he said in a statement.

Mr. Emmanuelli, who visited Ubundu Sunday, was due to leave for the Zairean capital Kinshasa later Monday to meet authorities, aid officials and French non-governmental organisations.



Rwandan refugees too weak or sick to flee when advancing Zairean rebels captured the area one week ago, lie within the deserted camp of Tingi Tingi. United Nations agencies are looking at ways to repatriate the several hundred refugees still in the camp back to Rwanda (Reuters photo)

He put the number of refugees at the Ubundu camp at between 30,000 and 40,000 and said some had complained about mistreatment. They were suffering from illnesses including malaria and respiratory

problems, he said. A French-chartered plane carrying 40 tonnes of aid arrived in the Zairean town of Kisangani Monday, he said, adding that it was planned to transport the aid to the Ubundu camp.

Taiwan airliner hijacked to China

BEIJING (R) — An unemployed Taiwanese journalist Monday doused himself with petrol aboard a Taiwan airliner and hijacked the plane to China where he requested political asylum, officials said.

The Boeing 757 airliner, carrying 150 passengers and six crew, was on its way back to Taiwan after landing safely in the southeastern city of Niamen.

Chinese police said the suspect, identified by Taiwan as Liu Shan-Chung, 45, was being held in Niamen for questioning.

"The hijacker wants political asylum," an airport official said by telephone.

An executive of Far East Air Transport, the operator of the hijacked Taiwanese airliner, told reporters the man who forced Flight 128 to fly to China said he faced political repression in Taiwan.

"The hijacker told the captain I am a victim of political repression," said Lee Yun-Ning, general manager of Far East Air Transport, speaking in Taipei.

Taiwan denounced China's return of the suspect, saying it had the right to put him on trial.

"We have legal jurisdiction," Taiwan Justice Minister Liao Cheng-Hao said Sunday after the plane crossed the Taiwan Strait

and touched down in Xiamen. "The mainland authorities should return the hijacker immediately."

Chinese officials did not say how they would deal with the suspect.

Hijacking is a capital offence but commandeering an aircraft from China's arch rival Taiwan would be determined by political considerations as well as legal guidelines, lawyers said.

China and Taiwan have been rivals since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949 when the Nationalists fled to the island after their defeat on the mainland by the Communists.

The Taiwan airliner was on a scheduled flight from the island's southern city of Kaohsiung to Taipei when it changed course and headed for the China mainland.

Mr. Liu had doused himself with petrol and forced the pilot to change course, Taiwanese authorities said.

Mr. Liu worked briefly as a journalist for the east Taiwan newspaper Lien-tung Daily after being fired a year ago from Kaohsiung's The Commons Daily for discipline problems.

In Taiwan, Defence Minister Chang Chung-Ling said four Taiwan fighters had scrambled into an escort formation and tailed the plane part of the way across

the Taiwan Strait.

Taiwan defence officials decided not to intercept the flight to avoid a military "misunderstanding" with China's People's Liberation Army, a defence official told Reuters.

The last hijacking of a Taiwanese airliner to China was in May 1986, when the pilot of a Boeing 747 cargo plane owned by Taiwan's flag carrier China Airlines commandeered the jet and flew it to Guangzhou.

Beijing returned the plane and two crew members who did not want to stay in China after talks between the two rivals in Hong Kong.

China endured a rash of 12 hijackings in 1993 and 1994 by Chinese who ordered pilots to fly them to Taiwan for political asylum.

Air piracy fell off sharply after Beijing launched a major drive to improve what had been lax security at most airports.

Later Monday, the hijacked passenger airline arrived back in Taipei.

The aircraft with 149 passengers and eight crew landed at Taipei's Sungshan Domestic Airport at 8:05 p.m. (12:05 GMT).

Airport security and prosecutors were ready to board the aircraft for investigation, while ambulances and fire engines stood by.

China seeks 3 over bomb attacks

HONG KONG (AFP) — Chinese police are seeking three people from the Muslim-dominated Xinjiang province in connection with bomb attacks in Beijing thought to be the work of separatists, according to a report Monday.

Security has been tightened in the Chinese capital and a special investigation panel set up to look for the two men and a woman, identified only as coming from Xinjiang, the Independent Chinese-language Sing Tao daily said.

A bomb went off at the busy Dongdaqiao intersection in eastern Beijing Thursday. The following day an explosion ripped through a bus injuring at least 10 people.

Thursday's explosion, on a sidewalk near Beijing's popular Blue Island Shopping Centre, did not cause

any injuries.

Tao Sijia, Chinese public security minister, however, told reporters in Beijing Monday that there were no clues pinpointing the bomb attacks to the indigenous inhabitants of Xinjiang, in China's far northwest, racially different from the Han Chinese.

Tao declined to say whether any arrests had been made.

Chinese authorities have offered a reward for anyone providing information about the terrorist attack following the incidents.

Chinese television and newspapers have already promised "special rewards" for information leading to the arrest of the "criminals" behind Friday's bus bombing in western Beijing.

Beijing Mayor Jia Qinglin told reporters in Beijing that there had been many res-

ponses from residents.

Wu Jiechuan, posts and telecommunications minister, told reporters while attending the on-going National People's Congress in Beijing, that security had been tightened at all post and telecommunications offices.

Although the official media reported 10 injured, witnesses said three people were killed. No one has claimed responsibility for either explosion.

The attacks followed a spate of terrorist bombings by Muslim separatists in Xinjiang.

Over the last month, exiled Uighur groups in Kazakhstan have claimed responsibility for three bus bombings in the Xinjiang capital, Urumqi, in which nine people died and 74 were injured.

But authorities could not ease implementation of Beijing's strict birth control

Taleban restructure government

KABUL (R) — Afghanistan's purist Islamic Taleban is slimming down the government because it is bloated with too many ministries and is a heavy burden on the country.

The six-man ruling council of the Taleban, which rules three-quarters of Afghanistan, decided to merge a number of ministries and slash others to department level on the orders of their leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar.

"On the basis of an order by the Amir Al-Momineen (leader of the faithful), a change in the structure of the government has been approved," said the Taleban-controlled Voice of Shariat radio Sunday evening.

"The caretaker Council of the Islamic State of Afghanistan has ordered a revision of the ministerial structure of the government established in 1356 (1977) in the Islamic calendar," the radio said in a report monitored in Kabul.

"It has ordered that some of the ministries and departments created during the Communist regime and the evil and corrupt governments that followed them be adjusted to departments and directorates."

Any ministry lowered to the level of a department loses its seat in the cabinet.

The Taleban's deputy minister of foreign affairs, Sher Abbas Stanakzai, told Reuters in a recent interview the Communists and their successors had bloated the government structure to create more jobs.

The existing system was proving a heavy burden on the country, he added.

"When the Communists came to power (in 1977) they wanted to employ more people, so they changed departments into ministries."

We now have more than 28 ministries in Afghanistan, which is a big load on the government's shoulders," Mr. Stanakzai said Thursday.

Under the changes announced Sunday night:

— The Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Housing, and Ministry of Reconstruction merged to form the Ministry of Public Utilities

— the Ministry of Religious Trust and the Attorney General's Office merged to become the Ministry of Justice

— the Ministry of Light Industries and Food merged into the Ministry of Mines and Industries

— the Department of Asylum, which controlled orphanages and mental hospitals, was merged into the Ministry of Education.

— the Department of Radio and Television was merged into the Ministry of Information and Culture.

A number of ministries will become departments. The order said the ministries of transport, civil aviation and tourism, labour and social affairs, refugees repatriation, manys and disabled, rural development, and central statistics would become departments.

In a separate development, the Taleban militia has sent a protest note to the U.N., saying rival Afghan factions have set up military bases in neighbouring Tajikistan, Kabul officials said Monday.

"The Republic of Tajikistan in harmony with the Russian Federation has put a military base at the disposal of the ousted (Afghan) government," the Afghan Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The ministry said an air base in Kulyab province of Tajikistan had been made available to the anti-Taleban forces.

"This base is used for air-lifting arms and ammunition, escalating the war and acts of subversion against the Islamic state of Afghanistan," the statement added.

The military base at Kulyab, located due north of Afghanistan's Takhar province, has been reportedly established for Ahmad Shah Masood, military topgun for ex-President Burhanuddin Rabbani who was ousted from Kabul by the Taleban Sept. 27, 1996.

"The Foreign Ministry of the Islamic State of Afghanistan regrettably considers this move as an act of interference and seriously condemns it," the statement said.

The establishment of the base was contrary to the "good-neighbourliness and friendship" which the Islamic State of Afghanistan extended towards Tajikistan and regional neighbours, the Foreign Ministry said.

"Such hostile moves by the Republic of Tajikistan — with support of big countries of the region — is contrary to regional security," it added.

The statement, in a veiled threat to Russia, warned of "dramatic consequences" if support for anti-Taleban factions based in Tajikistan was not halted.

Russian commander pleads for delay in implementing disarmament pact

MOSCOW (AFP) — The head of Russia's strategic nuclear missile force, General Igor Sergeev, backs a delay of several years in implementing the START 2 disarmament treaty with the United States, Interfax News Agency reported.

START 2, signed in 1992 by Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his then U.S. counterpart George Bush, provides for deep cuts in the

number of nuclear warheads held by the two sides by 2003, but has not yet been ratified by the Russian parliament.

In an interview with Interfax Sunday, Gen. Sergeev said that calls for a postponement to 2006 or 2007 in implementing the treaty were fully justified.

He justified the delay by saying that "the present situation differs considerably

from that which prevailed when the treaty was signed."

The Russians urged a five-year delay when the previous U.S. Defence Secretary, William Perry, visited Moscow last October, Interfax quoted a senior unnamed Russian Defence Ministry official as saying at the time.

Uganda seeks urgent help to avoid famine

KAMPALA (R) — Uganda has called for urgent international relief supplies to avert the threat of famine in the drought-hit east of the country.

Uganda's weather office said Monday that rains normally expected in March were now unlikely to arrive until April.

Paul Etiang, minister for labour and social services, told a Women's Day meeting at the weekend that people in affected areas "should prepare for a worse situation" and called for urgent help from abroad.

Mr. Etiang said 2.1 million people in northern and eastern Uganda were affected by current food shortages.

In the northern Ugandan town of Kitgum, local authorities said there was an acute food crisis, especially in camps created for people displaced in fighting or Sudanese refugees.

Agriculture officer Valdo Odeke of the northern town of Kumi said that people in eight of the 18 sub-counties in his district were on the brink of starvation.

Mr. Odeke told reporters that in worst-case areas, people ate three times a week while in better-off places, meals were once a day instead of the customary three.

He added that too much rain in the first half of last year flooded crops while drought beginning in the second part destroyed whatever crops had been secured.

Local council official Bamusende Bwanabale said impending famine in his southwestern Kasese district was mainly because of a low-scale civil war in the

area. Rebels, the Ugandan government says operate from Zaire, have been active there for months.

Mr. Etiang's warning came after a senior Ugandan food official said last week that drought and civil strife could explode into mass starvation unless action was taken to stem the problems.

Augustine Mwenda, coordinator of the National Early Warning and Food Information Unit, said that districts in east Uganda faced famine because drought had destroyed their crops.

"There is actually fear of serious famine. We have already informed the authorities of imminent disaster," Mr. Mwenda said.

Mr. Etiang also blamed the famine on rebellion in northern Uganda and the southwestern district of Kasese, indiscriminate sale of food stocks in eastern Uganda and ecological factors.

Armed factions in the north have fought the government of President Yoweri Museveni for nearly a decade. The most prominent of these is the lords' resistance army that seeks to rule the country on the basis of the Bible's Ten Commandments.

The worst drought in East Africa in four years has severely reduced food production in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. It also threatens to cut production of their key cash crop, coffee.

Differences persist after U.S.-Russia talks on NATO — Moscow

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia injected a note of caution Monday into ongoing talks with NATO leaders saying differences persisted although "positive work" had been achieved in weekend negotiations.

NATO Secretary General Javier Solana and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov had three hours of talks at a secret location in Moscow Sunday over the alliance's expansion into East Europe.

A joint statement afterwards said the talks progressed "positively," adding that both sides were "attempting to bring their positions closer." For the first time the statement did not make any direct reference to differences of opinion.

But a statement Monday from the Russian Foreign Ministry, noting that "positive work" had been accomplished, said "differences persist on a series of problems." Interfax News Agency reported.

"We have discussed NATO's response to proposals Russia made" prior to Mr. Solana's visit, the Foreign Ministry said, adding that talks would continue. But it did not say when.

A NATO source said Mr. Primakov and Mr. Solana had agreed to meet again "relatively soon" but did not say whether it would be before the March 19-20 summit in Helsinki between President Boris Yeltsin and U.S. President Bill Clinton.

The discussions which were the third round since the beginning of the year, aimed to resolve differences arising from Russian concern over the impact of an expanded alliance on national security.

They were also aimed at preparing some of the groundwork for the summit at which Mr. Clinton and Mr. Yeltsin are expected to devote much of their time to the NATO issue, the main diplomatic flashpoint between Russia and the West since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The first new members of the alliance are to be nominated at a NATO summit in Madrid in July, with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland the leading contenders.

In Warsaw, the presidential office announced Monday that Poland's Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Tadeusz Wilecki would be replaced.

Gen. Wilecki has been criticised in the West because of his opposition to civilian control of the army, a basic requirement by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) for candidates to the alliance.

The main topic of Sunday's talks was thought to have been Russia's demand for a commitment from NATO not to establish any military infrastructure on the territory of new members.

Mr. Solana was expected to propose reciprocal confidence-building measures, such as the exchange of photographs on airspace or information on troop training, according to a NATO source who asked to remain anonymous.

The other bone of contention is the form of the NATO-Russia agreement being drawn up. While Moscow wants a legally-binding accord, the alliance is seeking a more flexible solution.

Mr. Solana Monday left Moscow for Almaty, capital of Kazakhstan, for a visit to Central Asia aimed at deepening NATO ties with the former Soviet Central Asian Republics without offending Russia.

In the visit which continues until Saturday, Mr. Solana will also visit Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan which, together with Kazakhstan, are members of NATO's partnership for peace — a bridge-building programme designed to prepare possible candidates in Eastern Europe for ultimate accession to the defence alliance.

According to Central Asian foreign ministries, Mr. Solana hopes to accelerate preparation for military exercises to be held as part of the partnership programme from Sept. 15 to 25 in Kazakhstan.

China's population reportedly hits 1.224 billion in 1996

BEIJING (R) — China's population growth rate fell slightly in 1996 but the world's most populous nation still needs to improve birth control policies in rural areas, the China daily said Monday.

The natural population growth rate was 10.42 per

thousand in 1996, a slight drop of 0.13 per thousand from the year before, the newspaper quoted the State Statistical Bureau as saying.

China had 1.224 billion people at the end of 1996, up 12.68 million from the year before, the bureau said.

"The birth rate has

dropped ... and the regional differences in family planning work have narrowed," the newspaper quoted Minister of the State Family Planning Commission Peng Peiyun as saying.

But authorities could not ease implementation of Beijing's strict birth control

policy because many areas were still seeing a boom in child births, said President Jiang Zemin.

"Family planning is still difficult in the countryside, especially in underdeveloped regions," the China daily quoted Mr. Jiang as saying.

"An effort must be made

to ensure that the country's population is held to 1.3 billion by the end of the century," Mr. Jiang said.

China fines urban families that have more than one child but has relaxed its policy slightly in rural areas.

Authorities should use incentives such as financial

and technical aid to encourage families in poor villages to have fewer children, Mr. Jiang said.

The Family Planning Commission would launch a new programme this year aimed at training birth control specialists, Mr. Peng told a meeting of family planning officials.



An Albanian rebel fires his gun as a group of his comrades parade a seized army tank through the streets of Gjirokastra, March 9. Thousands of Gjirokastra residents have joined the uprising against Albanian President Sali Berisha, seizing an array of weapons from state arsenals (Reuters photo)

Rebels control four more towns in Albania

TIRANA (AFP) — Rebels in southern Albania controlled four more towns Monday as the government awaited the insurgents' response to a plan to end a chaotic 10-day uprising against President Sali Berisha.

Violence flared again just a day after Mr. Berisha moved to avert outright civil war with a proposal for early elections and a coalition government including the opposition. Ten people were shot in the town of Berat, hospital officials said.

Rioters took control of Berat Sunday after seizing arms from three army depots as soldiers looked on, and are blocking all roads leading into town, witnesses there told AFP.

Insurgents also commandeered weapons as they took over nearby Skrapari, an opposition socialist stronghold that was loyal to dictator Enver Hoxha in Albania's days of Orthodox Communism.

Sources also confirmed that five people were killed

Sunday in Permeti, 30 kilometres from the city of Gjirokastra, also held by rebels. In Permeti, residents torched the police station. Armed rioters also took over police, located between Berat and Skrapari and which has a munitions factory.

With those operations the insurgents now control eleven towns in the south of Albania. The unrest has left at least 35 dead in clashes with security forces or random shootings.

Under intense pressure from the West, Mr. Berisha and 10 opposition parties reached an agreement Sunday to form a coalition government ahead of early elections to be held by June. The rebels were offered amnesty and given 10 days to hand in weapons they have stolen from police and soldiers.

But an official of the former Communist Socialist Party said the insurgents were wary. "They are waiting to see the makeup of the new government," the official said.

Albania's crisis began in January with the collapse of Pyramid investment schemes in which many people in Europe's poorest country lost their life savings. The unrest turned to violent anarchy last week-end as rioters seized weapons from police stations and army barracks.

The protesters have been pressing for Mr. Berisha's resignation, early elections and reimbursement of the money they lost. The town of Vlore, one of the hot spots of the uprising, was noticeably calmer Monday.

At a rally in the Town Square, representatives from the committee that says it is running the Adriatic Port called on all former policemen to return to their posts to help restore a semblance of order.

Many policemen fled some weeks ago as riots swept away the ruling authorities. However, some local policemen have remained in the town or

joined the rebels. None though, wear a uniform.

The so-called Committee for the Salvation of Vlore was due to meet in a school building later Monday to discuss how to restore order and its response to Sunday's offer from Berisha, a spokesman said.

"The salvation committee has decided to restore calm and peace to Vlore. We have asked all honest policemen to report for duty. We will interview all of them and decide which ones can work. The police will be under the authority of the committee," said Sokol Qendra, who said he was the committee's chief of information.

Leaders of Albania's political parties were also meeting Monday to discuss the formation of the new government ahead of another meeting with Mr. Berisha. The socialists want control of the Interior Ministry as the country heads for early elections because the last voting, in May of last year, was marred by fraud.

New rains plague Ohio Valley flood victims

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky (R) — More rain plagued the flood-stricken Ohio River Valley Sunday, causing some streams to rise again and slowing the monumental clean-up from the worst deluge in more than three decades.

Compared to the 30 centimetres of rain that fell in the region a week ago, however, the new rains were more a nuisance than a threat to life and property — a cold, wet slap in the face to thousands still out of their homes or trying to reconstruct what they lost.

The Licking River, a tributary of the Ohio in central Kentucky, was rising again Sunday near Falmouth, Kentucky, a town nearly devastated by last week's flooding. Officials said the river would rise 122 centimetres, but not reach flood stage at Falmouth.

Falmouth's mayor, Max Goldberg, suffered a heart attack over the weekend and was reported in fair condition Sunday at a hospital.

At Cincinnati, the new rains — running off rain-soaked grounds with no chance to soak in — caused officials to push back estimates of when the river would drop below flood

stage to Wednesday morning, instead of Monday as earlier forecast.

The Ohio had crested and begun to fall at Louisville, but it was a slow, muddy process. Only the tops of traffic lights poked above the coffee-coloured swamp along Louisville's riverfront. A flood wall kept most of the city dry.

But downstream at Paducah, Kentucky, officials ordered a 434-room hotel closed because it was outside the city's floodgates.

In nine days, 31 deaths have been blamed on the high water and flashfloods along the valley from West Virginia westward.

Forecasters called for dry weather the rest of the week, as the wet weather pattern that pulled moisture from the Gulf of Mexico into the nation's midsection may be shifting.

The crest of the Ohio River was hitting a more hilly landscape where most homes were on hillsides and should escape the floodwaters, said Alden Taylor of Indiana's Emergency Management Agency.

"The topography changes. There are steeper hills overlooking the river," he noted. "A lot of homes are still

wet and there are still homes (in eastern Indiana) with water in them." Mr. Taylor said of the gradually receding floodwaters.

Schools in parts of southern Indiana that had been closed since the flooding began were preparing to open again by Tuesday once road inspections proved it would be safe for school buses, Mr. Taylor said.

Sunday's rainstorms broke a three-day dry spell that allowed tens of thousands of residents back into their ruined homes and begin the rebuilding process — with many residents expected to move to higher ground.

"Somebody can tell me I can rebuild, but I will not do it," said Cora Ferguson of hard-hit Falmouth, Kentucky. "I will not come back to Falmouth. It's stupid to rebuild and then the spring rains come and it happens all over again."

Ms. Ferguson and her husband own a dozen flood-damaged rental properties in Falmouth, a town of 2,300 ravaged by the Licking River about 65 kilometres southeast of Cincinnati.

Overall damage estimates along the Ohio River and its tributaries ranged above

\$500 million in Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia and Indiana.

Officials estimated that at least 75,000 homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed in Kentucky, while 5,600 homes and businesses sustained heavy damage in Ohio.

Some flood victims managed to joke amid their tears. Richard Craig, a resident of the tiny riverside community of California, Ohio, on the eastern edge of Cincinnati, said while surveying the muddy mess in his home: "I want you to know — my wife's a better housekeeper than this."

At New Richmond, Ohio, a town near Cincinnati that was severely damaged, antique dealer Barbara Nelson said simply: "We'll just come back the way we always have in the past."

It may be the end of this week before the crest passes out of the Ohio and into the Mississippi River. More flooding is forecast in western Kentucky and southern Illinois, but the most populated areas are safe behind flood walls erected after a series of losing battles with the Ohio during the 20th century.

Suu Kyi urges compassion, help for Burma refugees

BANGKOK (R) — Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi Monday urged compassion and help for ethnic Karen refugees, who have fled to Thailand in face of attacks by Burmese troops.

"The plight of our Karen refugees should appeal to the compassion of all right-thinking people all over the world," Ms. Suu Kyi said in a videotaped message smuggled out of Burma and obtained by Reuters Monday.

Thousands of Karen refugees fled to Thailand last month after Burmese troops destroyed bases of the Karen National Union (KNU) guerrilla organisation,

which is fighting for autonomy from Rangoon.

The United States and refugee organisations have accused the Thais of forcing some Karen refugees back into Burma.

Thai military officials have denied the charges. They said they have disarmed fighters and asked them to return voluntarily to Burma, but have allowed family members into Thailand and ensured they were housed away from fighting at the border.

Dressed in a traditional multi-coloured Karen outfit and seated in front of a large Karen flag, Ms. Suu Kyi called on all Burma's ethnic groups to work together to

end divisiveness.

"We would like to appeal to all the nations and all the ethnic nationalities of Burma to join us in our endeavours to bring an end to the hatred and animosity that is decimating our nation."

More than 70,000 Karen refugees have been living in camps inside Thailand since the 1980s.

"It is not simply that they have been forced to flee from their homes to escape the ravages of armed conflict," Ms. Suu Kyi said.

"Many of our refugees will never be able to go back to their homes... because these homes have been destroyed. We cannot tell how long our Karen brothers and sisters

will be forced to remain in a state of uncertainty and impotence."

The KNU, formed in 1948, has rejected several peace overtures from Burma's military government. It is one of a handful of guerrilla groups still fighting the Rangoon central government.

Ms. Suu Kyi has said she would join forces with ethnic groups to bring democracy back to Burma, but she told reporters last week she has not spoken with anyone from the KNU.

"Their troubles will not come to an end until a political solution has been found that will heal the deep wounds that are lacerating Burma," she said.

Arrest raises paedophile spectre in France

PARIS (AFP) — The spectre of paedophilia cast a cloud over France Monday after police confirmed they were questioning a suspect who has allegedly admitted to kidnapping eight children three of whom were raped.

Amid heightened concern sparked by cases in neighbouring Belgium the arrest of 35-year-old Jean-Paul Barbault, caught red-handed trying to kidnap a 10-year-old schoolgirl Friday, has raised fears still further.

At least one French paper Monday gave advice on how to "sensitise" children to the threat of child abusers, as details emerged of the alleged crimes of Barbault, a father-of-two from the Gironde region of southwest France.

Police say they are questioning Barbault over 10 kidnappings over the last 18 months across western France, around the region where Barbault lived with his wife and children. He has reportedly admitted to eight cases.

Fears have focussed in

particular on one schoolgirl, 10-year-old Marion, has been missing since Nov. 14 after disappearing from outside a school in Agen to the east of Bordeaux.

Barbault was charged at the weekend after he was caught red-handed in a failed attempt to seize 10-year-old Maëlle last Friday near Carcassonne in southwest France, where he is being held in custody.

A sales representative, he was seized after he persuaded the schoolgirl to get into his car by pretending to be a school doctor, police said.

"He admitted to the actions while in custody," said a police spokesman, without saying whether he had made a formal confession.

Barbault's home was searched Saturday but no significant material was found, police said.

His lawyer Pierre Blazy said investigations were at an early stage. "He is a sick man," he said, adding that his client had "admitted serious acts, but we have to see whether that is true, and

check a lot of things."

Officials have not released details of other cases being probed, but they are believed to include at least one rape of a 10-year-old on Nov. 5 last year at Saint-Meen-Le-Grand near Rennes in northwest France.

In that case the girl was seized as she left school, by a man who presented himself as a school doctor — exactly the same circumstances as last week's failed attempt by Barbault.

"We have every reason to think that the man arrested in Carcassonne is indeed the rapist from Saint-Meen," said a source close to the investigation.

Other possibly linked cases were being investigated, police said. These included that of Marion, whose case has been publicised all over the region with posters. In an unprecedented move, her picture has also been published on 15 million milk cartons along with a police telephone number.

Officials are reluctant to speculate about a link with

the killing of British schoolgirl Caroline Dickinson, who was raped and murdered in a youth hostel in Brittany in July last year.

But a source close to the investigation said a DNA sample would be taken from Mr. Barbault to check for any link to the Dickinson case "even if there is no hope that Mr. Barbault could be the killer."

The case comes amid heightened concern about paedophilia following the latest case in neighbouring Belgium, where the body of nine-year-old Loubna Benissa was discovered last Wednesday in a garage basement.

Another missing child case was solved Monday when police arrested a suspect over the disappearance of seven-year-old Celia in Clermont-Ferrand, central France.

Police said the girl had been held for a week in a house not far from her home. She managed to escape Sunday and was found by a farmer on the side of a road, police said.

Chirac upbeat on youth jobs in election run-up

PARIS (R) — French President Jacques Chirac will paint an upbeat picture of job prospects for disillusioned young people in a television interview Monday widely-seen as helping to set the stage for next year's general elections.

Aides said Mr. Chirac's message in the 1940 GMT broadcast, before an audience of young people and company heads at a Futurist Science Park, would be "go-getting, mobilising."

Unemployment and a 25 per cent jobless rate among 18 to 25 year-olds is top of the agenda in the run-up to general elections early next year.

In the past week the centre-right government has been buffeted by car-maker Renault's decision to close a Belgian plant and lay off 3,100 workers. The opposition socialists have pledged to find work for 700,000 young people if elected.

"The aim is to highlight the president's ambition to move French society forward, to emphasise the importance of movement. It's a step in his crusade for jobs for the young," a Chirac aide said.

The head of state would "speak of the future, of confidence, of hope" for jobs for the young. One aide said the aim was to show Mr. Chirac as "modern... a man marching with great strides towards the 21st century."

"Operation reconquest," headlined the daily Le Parisien, saying Mr. Chirac would try to charm young voters who played a big part in his 1995 election but who today are the hardest-hit victims of economic gloom.

Even the show's title "the year 2000, a chance for all?" echoes Mr. Chirac's presidential campaign slogan: "France for all."

Former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of the UDF, junior partner in the ruling coalition, warned the government at the weekend: "The Socialists were swept from power by unemployment and corruption scandals."

He said he awaited "an audacious jobs policy" from the government.

But an opinion poll published by the weekly Le Journal Du Dimanche showed young people had much more confidence in themselves (65 per cent) or in their parents (40 per cent) than in the president (13 per cent) to "prepare their future and that of our society."

Bosnian police say NATO hiding a terrorist suspect in Sarajevo

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Bosnian Police Minister Mehmed Zilic said the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) may be hiding accomplices of a French murder suspect who was arrested in a police shoot-out Sunday, Bosnian newspapers reported Monday.

Police arrested Frenchman Lionel Dumont and gunned-down his alleged accomplice, Zefferini Biniam from Djibouti, in a gun battle in the town of Zenica Sunday that left one Bosnian policeman wounded.

They have accused the two men of killing a policeman in a bungled robbery at a Zenica petrol station on Feb. 15.

Mr. Zilic was quoted in Sarajevo's newspapers as saying after the arrests: "We still suspect that many other persons for which we have reasons to believe to be members of this terrorist group hide in SFOR bases. Soon we will prove this."

SFOR denied Monday harbouring any members of Dumont's gang.

Last Saturday Bosnian

police said SFOR may be hiding Dumont at their headquarters in the Sarajevo suburb of Ilidza, after a man matching his description was seen driving in there by police.

Mr. Zilic appears to have dropped the claim that SFOR is holding Dumont, but he said other members of the gang, which he believes to be terrorist rather than simply criminal, are being held by SFOR.

Bosnian police said Dumont and two known associates told local people in Zenica that they were members of the Mujahadeen, a loose grouping of irregular army units from the Middle East which fought alongside Bosnia's Muslim-led government forces during the 43-month Bosnian war that ended in December 1995.

"We deal here with foreign intelligence services paid by extremely strong lobbies that do not want the federation to function," said police minister for the Sarajevo Canton, Semsudin Mehmedovic, who was quoted as

saying in Sarajevo's newspapers. "Groups like this one were implanted from abroad under cover of being former members of the Mujahadeen unit. Their task is to conduct attacks that have a political background."

SFOR Monday repeated denials it had issued last week about harbouring terrorists on its bases. "SFOR is not holding any members of Dumont's gang. These accusations by a senior federation official are unfounded, unsubstantiated, and regrettable," said SFOR spokesman Major Andrew Saddleton, Royal Marines.

He said the man suspected of being Dumont Saen driving into SFOR headquarters on March 1 was an American working on the base who was later produced for Bosnian police officers who verified he was not the suspect.

Mr. Zilic is police minister for the Croat-Muslim Federation, one of two semi-independent entities into which Bosnia was divided by the Dayton Peace Agreement, signed in 1995.

Looters raid shops after Fiji cyclone

SUVA, Fiji (R) — Looters, some using a stolen coffin to float away their ill-gotten goods, have been raiding scores of cyclone-damaged shops in Fiji, police said Monday.

Cyclone Gavin which hit Fiji last week killed four people, left 16 seamen missing and caused widespread flooding. Emergency Service officials said.

One woman died in a landslide, two other people drowned and a fourth person was killed when she was hit by a falling tree, police said.

Sixteen fishermen were still missing Monday, 10 from the fishing vessel W-asawasa one which had engine problems off the island

of Vanu Lele at the height of the cyclone Friday.

The cyclone, which hit Fiji Thursday and Friday, produced top winds of 240 kilometres per hour.

Police said looters were Monday raiding cyclone-damaged shops along the west coast of Fiji's main island Viti Levu, where flooding had caused widespread damage and electricity supplies had been cut.

One group of thieves loaded goods into a coffin stolen from a nearby mosque and floated it down a flooded creek.

Police chief in the town of Ba, Jiten Sharma, said police had difficulty chasing looters because of the fast-flowing waters and a lack of

boats.

"I instructed police officers not to risk their lives but try to get to people who were near them. Despite this we managed to arrest a very large number of people," Mr. Sharma said.

A total of 38 people were arrested for looting.

Fiji's sugar crop, the South Pacific nation's second major income earner after tourism, would be affected by cyclone damage, but losses were still difficult to accurately assess.

Sugar Cane Growers Council chief executive Grish Maharaj said damage surveys were continuing but all cane areas seemed to have sustained extensive damage from the cyclone.

Pakistan court frees woman to marry man of choice

LAHORE, Pakistan (R) — A Pakistan court freed a woman to join her husband Monday, dismissing her Muslim fundamentalist father's petition that the marriage was invalid because it had taken place without his permission.

"Marriage without the consent of a wali (guardian) is not invalid," said Justice Ehsan Ul-Haq Chaudhry, reading the Lahore High Court decision that settled what was seen as a test case pitting Muslim conservatives against women's rights advocates.

The three-member bench split 2-1 in a majority decision that upholds 22-year-old Saima Waheed's marriage to Arshad Ahmad, a lecturer in English at a government college.

"It is the most wonderful day of my life," a jubilant Ahmad said at the court. "We have gone through a great ordeal that was spread over 11 months. But now I can join hands with my wife once again. I am extremely happy."

Saima will now be able to leave a women's shelter where she has been kept under court order for the past 11 months.

"It's a historic decision for the women of Pakistan," said Asma Jahangir, Saima's lawyer and chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP).

The case was one of the most controversial faced by the Lahore High Court since a 1994 trial of three Christians accused of blaspheming the Prophet Muhammad.

Ms. Jahangir also defended the three Christians, one of whom was shot dead outside the Lahore High Court building and two of whom fled to Germany after their acquittal in 1995.

Saima's father, Abdul Waheed Ropri, and his followers left the courtroom silently after the decision, on which Mr. Ropri refused to comment. "There's no use in talking now," he said.

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Power to the judiciary

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's directive to the government Sunday to take effective measures to ensure the independence of the judiciary was not the first time that the Monarch intervened on behalf of the judicial system in the country. There was hardly a time in the past when the King did not voice strong support for the justice system and called for its complete independence. Yet despite these repeated calls the administration of justice remains short of expectations. We probably have to start investigating and building at the roots in order to reach our goals.

His Majesty's specific request that the 1972 judiciary law be reexamined in order to remove all semblances of interferences in it by the executive branch is the boldest and most appropriate step proposed so far to overhaul the system. The Judicial Council which appoints judges is still very much controlled by the minister of justice in the sense that some of its members are appointed by him.

The fact that constitutional issues are still interpreted by a council composed of members of the Senate and senior judges suggests that the area for improvement also covers other territory. As long as we do not have a constitutional court to make pronouncements on related issues, the delivery of justice would remain lacking in important areas. Till the moment arrives when we have a constitutional court the least that we could expect is to bestow on our high courts the mandate to render judgements on constitutional matters.

As for the tenure and pay for judges, we certainly support every suggestion that they be improved drastically. This is necessary so as to ensure the highest level of integrity and independence of judges.

The introduction of technology to the court system is also a pressing matter; any person who goes to court in this country readily notices how inefficient is the way courts conduct their affairs. Suffice it to recall that court transcripts are still written and kept the way they were in the Ottoman days.

The curtailment of the efforts to reintroduce extraordinary courts or security courts in time of peace must also be an important element in the projected changes. The introduction of new blood into the system is also urgently needed, including jurists who are trained not only locally but also abroad.

It is every Jordanian's hope that this time around the government will act on the latest intervention by the head of state so that the judicial branch of government becomes more modern, more independent and more efficient in the administration of justice for all citizens.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON the U.S. veto of a U.N. Security Council resolution that would have condemned Israel's plans to construct a Jewish settlement in Arab Jerusalem lands, a writer for Al Ra'i said that the apparent warm relations between Washington and some Arab leaders do not compel the U.S. administration to abandon its very strong ties with Tel Aviv. It is to be noted that Washington's veto came close after a visit to the U.S. by President Yasser Arafat and in advance of a visit by President Mubarak of Egypt, but the U.S. administration seems to be determined to manifest its alliance with the Jewish state by vetoing the Security Council resolution regardless of the Arab leaders' parley with the American leadership, said Mahmoud Rimawi. The writer said that the Arabs could convene a meeting of the Jerusalem committee and one of Arab leaders and also further coordinate their moves with the European Union if they wish to bring about pressure on the Jewish state to change its present policies. Of course the Arab countries' move to take the issue to the U.N. General Assembly is logical step in the right direction, said the writer, but every effort must be exerted at the moment, on other fronts, to win worldwide support for the Palestinian rights.

A WRITER for Al Dustour criticised the practice of appointing retired people in leading positions in government offices, alleging that such instances abound in the public administration system. These favoured people who are offered contracts with high salaries offer very little service to the state at a time when employees of lower ranks do the same work better and for lesser pay, said Mohammad Subelti. The writer said that while these retired and former government officials receive high salaries, the university graduates who have been waiting in line for years to get jobs are totally ignored. More often than not the appointment of the retired people takes place upon the recommendation of ministers to the cabinet, under the pretext that the government is in need of their expertise, experiences and skills, said the writer. He noted that these have proved to be offering very little, or nothing at all, in comparison with the other serving employees. The writer said only those with rare skills in accountancy, technology and other very specialised fields should be recruited to work under contracts for short periods of time. The writer said that the appointment of a large number of retired people with high salaries has been harming the state's treasury and causing frustration among the other employees.

The View from Fourth Circle

The birth of politics and the resumption of history

By Rami G. Khouri

WHEN THE modern political history of Jordan is written, this month of March 1997 may be seen in retrospect as the symbolic turning point when Jordan started to make the transition from tribalism to modernism. I say this because of three separate events that have taken place this month: the announcement by eight centrist-tribalist political parties to merge into a single party; His Majesty King Hussein's strong, public criticism in his television interview last Friday of the bureaucracy's weaknesses and the phenomenon of parliamentarian-cabinet ministers; and the King's announcement this week of the need to strengthen the judiciary and deepen the separation of powers among the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government.

Collectively, these three developments emphasise the obvious inability of the existing bureaucratic, political and non-monarchic governance structures to respond to the growing needs of the Jordanian people. The good news is that an enlightened and vigilant monarchy steps in when needed to address important national issues and redress severe imbalances or deficiencies. The bad news for Jordan is that the enlightened and vigilant monarchy remains, nearly eight decades after the advent of modern statehood, just about the only credible political force in the country. This month's developments bring this dichotomy into sharper focus. They highlight different aspects of the transition from tribalism to modernism — from an outdated concept of nationhood that derives from the centralised power of the state, to a more progressive concept of nationhood that is based on the concept of citizenship and the rights that go along with citizenship.

The eight merging political parties are noteworthy for three principal points: a) they dominate the centre and centre-right of the political spectrum and would have more combined support than any other grouping in the country, including the Islamists; b) they are heavily tribal-based in their leadership and membership (with powerhouse leaders from the Majali, Muasher, Arar, Khreishe, Rawabdeh, and Khair families); and c) they have been almost total failures in terms of promoting a Jordanian genuine political culture based on mass membership, ideological ideas, public debate of national issues and meaningful activism in the political arena. They have now recognised their broad weaknesses and ineffectiveness as political parties that innocently copied Western-style institutions and have embarked on the transformation into a new, more meaningful form of political organism.

The merger of these eight parties represents nothing less than the birth of Jordanian politics. This is a long overdue step onto the road from biology to ideology — from the wielding of political and economic power in society on the strength of one's family and blood relationships to political governance, power and incumbency based on one's

ideological appeal to a citizenry to whom one is also held accountable through a free and honest political process.

The only meaningful manner in which these parties can merge is to transcend their geographically narrow, heavily personalised, and largely organic appeals, and generate a new appeal based on ideology, ideas, performance, and, most important of all, the voters' sense of their rights as Jordanian citizens. It is noteworthy, in this respect, that the statement announcing the merger stressed the two elements that are uppermost in the minds of ordinary Jordanians: their equal constitutional rights as citizens of the Jordanian state, regardless of their origin, and their desire to achieve pan-Arab rights and progress in the face of perceived threats from Israel or foreign quarters.

"This is a long overdue step onto the road from biology to ideology — from the wielding of political and economic power in society on the strength of one's family and blood relationships to political governance, power and incumbency based on one's ideological appeal to a citizenry to whom one is also held accountable through a free and honest political process."

Tribal- and religious-based parties in recent years have made similar appeals, but have failed totally to deliver on their promises. The new centrist-nationalist party will have to prove that it is more effective by attracting Jordanian members and funding and by using its considerable power to negotiate political deals that respond to people's needs. My prediction is that the new party will ultimately stress Jordan's well-being via two principles that are already evident in its press statements to date: the equal civil and human rights of all Jordanians and Jordan's natural place within the wider pan-Arab context. (These two principles, not surprisingly, also anchor the human rights and equality-based appeal of Toujan Feisal, the one and only Jordanian who has achieved the status of modern political leader based on an ideological, as opposed to a tribal, religious, patriarchal or monarchial appeal).

This phenomenon is directly related to King Hussein's dramatic public calls for greater efficiency in the delivery of services by the government bureaucracy — for the King's statements, like the parties' merger, mark the mod-

ern Jordanian state's admission of the limits of tribalism as a form of public governance. King Hussein specifically mentioned two major problems that are directly due to tribal considerations: government ministers and other officials who benefit their families, clans and tribes through patronage jobs, and the appointment of ministers on the basis of regional (i.e. tribal) representation.

The many other points that King Hussein made — bureaucratic inefficiency, separation of powers, judicial independence, parliamentarians boycotting parliament, low quality media commentaries — are indirectly a consequence of tribal assertion in the realm of public power. They reflect the historical fact that Jordan does not enjoy a functioning political system, i.e. citizens, government officials and politicians who are bound to each other through the exercise of power, rights and responsibilities within the wider context of the polis, or the city. We have governance in Jordan — usually very good governance when enlightened leaders keep an eye on things, and step in to right wrongs — but we do not have politics.

The danger facing Jordan and many other Arab states is that the bureaucracy, the government and the tribal domain have been slowly converging into an integrated and increasingly inward-looking force that monopolised public power and resources and took care of its own; but this force also threatens to fragment much of the rest of the country and to fracture the noble concept of citizenship based on rights and equality. The vision that King Hussein offers — real separation of powers, an independent and high quality judiciary, a streamlined and efficient bureaucracy, a cabinet chosen on the basis of merit rather than blood and geography, parliamentarians who attend parliamentary sessions and intelligent, accurate and ideas-based press commentaries — heralds a modern political governance system.

To succeed, such a system should be based on limits to government power, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and a clear, legally mandated separation between personal identity, tribal solidarity, political authority and the responsibility of public office-holders to uphold the constitutional guarantees of freedom and equality. The fact that Jordanians from top to bottom are now agitating to achieve such a vision is good news. Many will resist the need to change and will seek to maintain biology and territoriality as the prime determinants of rights and privileges.

This birth of politics is also a resumption of history. The march of our predominantly Arab/Islamic Levantine history was interrupted three times in the last millennium — by Ottoman control, the European mandates and the combined impact of the cold war and the Arab-Israeli conflict. History is slowly resuming at last, as we see in the land of Jordan, in the month of March 1997.

Interest rates: Hanging in the balance or is there a clear direction?

By Khalid Walid Salah

THE JORDANIAN government from 1989 onwards undertook an economic restructuring programme directed at decreasing the deficit of our budget and creating more confidence in the economy. As a result, and since the beginning of 1993, the level of interest rates on the Jordanian dinar has been rising.

The Central Bank was, and still is, the major player in this programme. Through its operations and scrutiny, it is trying to enhance the confidence in our banking system and the dinar. The monetary policy adopted, which encompassed actions meant to alter the money supply, contributed towards increasing the level of interest rates.

In essence, higher interest rates hold inflation at acceptable levels and in check.

Furthermore, the pegging of the Jordanian dinar to the U.S. dollar contributed to increasing the foreign currency reserves, as depositors have begun exchanging

their dollar deposits for Jordanian dinars in order to gain from the favourable differential between the rate on the U.S. dollar and that on the dinar.

This policy has produced two different views in the market: The first advocates that such a trend is choking the investment sectors and, accordingly, high interest rates are increasing the cost of funds and the discount rates on cash inflows; hence acceptable returns are becoming harder to attain.

The second advocates that economic restructuring is of paramount importance in creating a sound and competitive economy through efficient usage of resources. Thus higher interest rates would only induce projects of high return and high value to enter the market and would make users of funds more wary. Furthermore, for an emerging economy like ours, such a policy will enhance the reserves in foreign currency and effectively will have a solid cover for the dinar.

The first view obviously reflects the feeling of the

private sector while the second reflects that of the government.

If one looks at details of the government's policy, one starts to see some positive aspects in it.

In general, and in more developed economies, a restrictive, discretionary monetary policy or a deceleration in the growth of the money supply would immediately be associated with decreased (or negative) growth in the level of the GNP. But the situation in Jordan is different. Even with the restrictive policy we are undergoing, the growth figures in the GNP are positive and are comparable to the sound healthy economies around the world. So, in effect, we find that we were running at lower efficiency levels than we are at present.

When taking the first view into account we see that for any new investment to be viable, it has to have a positive net present value. But with the prevailing level of interest rates, the discount rate (weighted average cost of capital) is

high, especially if one assigns a premium to the equity capital over that of the borrowed capital. Hence, fresh borrowings in dinars are going to decrease significantly.

Moreover and using the same explanation, valuations in the stock market are pressured and thus we see a decrease in activity.

But for how long will this situation persist? With the prevailing level of borrowing and the status of the debt and equity markets, further increases in the level of interest rates would have a significantly decreasing marginal effect, once taken from preset levels.

If the goal of the Central Bank of Jordan is to increase the foreign reserves, then it needs to draw up its targets and manage its monetary policy accordingly. If interest rates have to go up further, then the Central Bank should move decisively and swiftly in this direction. But the pace at which movement is taking place is putting more burden on our industries as

no clear direction or targets are known.

Once our monetary policy is clear, the effects shall be known and anticipated; thus, the short-run impact will be similar to the long-run impact and the policy gains will be instant, with no lag between action and effect.

A clear and conspicuous dialogue is needed between the Central Bank and the private sector so as businesses could take decisions regarding expected increase in rates.

Once the required reserves are achieved, enough confidence in our economy would have been built and easing in the money supply shall start taking place, hopefully together with a good growth in our GNP.

It is known that any restructuring policy is usually accompanied by some pain and suffering, but are we to gain more or lose in the long run?

Several emerging markets have adopted such policies of reform that led to an enhanced performance in

the economy, accompanied by sound growth and decreasing budget deficits.

Malaysia and Egypt have undergone severe restructuring, but both are enjoying noticeable economic growth.

It is time for all concerned institutions, private, public and governmental, to open a clear dialogue that addresses our short-term and long-term goals, for if we, jointly, as Jordanians, draw a clear and sound policy, adhere to its directives and pool our efforts together, we shall be able to attain better standards of living through an enhanced economic structure.

The writer, an analyst and investment manager, is the first Jordanian, residing in the Kingdom, to have acquired a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation. The title was granted by the Association of Investment Management and Research from Charlottesville, Virginia, U.S. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

All children need care

To the Editor:

WE HAVE all been very moved by the intervention of Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor on behalf of the orphans at Al Hussein Welfare Institute in Ashrafieh, but not surprised by the magnanimity and generosity of Their Majesties who have always been deeply concerned by the well-being of their citizens, especially the most needy and neglected.

As a volunteer, I have been involved in caring for some of those unfortunate children at Al Hussein Welfare Institute in Amman, during the past few years, though I stopped visiting the centre in 1991 because I was angered by the fact that some of the handicapped orphans I was caring for were suddenly being transferred to other centres, away from the capital.

Three years ago, I decided to find out about their whereabouts: I had been told that they were sheltered in a centre on the outskirts of Jerash. "The Jerash Rehabilitation Centre", so I went to see them.

I expected to be pleasantly surprised as the building was spacious, modern and set in a beautiful location. To meet them again was a shock: I could barely recognise them; their mental state was much worse than I had remembered.

It was clear to me that the progress they had gained during their stay in Amman through the weekly treatment by the Cerebral Palsy Foundation, and the psychological support and training at Al Fubeis Hospital

LETTERS

To the Editor:

were all but lost. As for the other children at the Jerash Rehabilitation Centre (who were mostly orphans and staying there on temporary basis), they appeared unhappy, distraught and severely malnourished. Moreover, it was obvious to me that most had been bruised and wounded rather badly. The children would be jittery and back off when approached, as if they expected to be beaten. They were gathered in rooms sitting around tables with nothing to do and nothing to play with. When I asked if they had any toys, the nurses pointed at a cupboard and nonchalantly told me that they were locked inside it. It was a beautiful day and I asked why the children couldn't make use of the pleasant garden. The answer was that only the older patients had that prerogative, and that the children were too young to take the "risk."

The whole atmosphere there was rather oppressive. When I asked the director of the institute why it was so, he boasted that for each patient, the government was spending a monthly amount of JD 250. I wondered whether the money was used in a proper way.

I believe it is high time officials at the Ministry of Social Affairs take the necessary steps to alleviate the suffering of all orphaned and handicapped children in Jordan, regardless of their location.

Maria Sandi,
Amman.

Fighting addictions

To the Editor:

DRUGS ARE bad for the mind and body, say experts in the field. And, unfortunately, it attracts especially youths seeking to perform some "heroic" deeds, trying to prove that they are grown ups and responsible. Taking drugs could mean smoking cigarettes, snorting cocaine or drinking alcohol.

The youths sometimes imitate their parents, thinking it is a mark of civilised society and modern behaviour. They believe this is the best means to entertain themselves.

Drug addiction and alcoholism are illnesses. Those suffering from these diseases need treatment, not punishment. I believe that all the members of any society should act together to save the drug addict.

It is also important that the members of the family understand the addict's situation, treat him gently and look after him carefully and patiently, without letting him feel guilty.

Press campaigns should be arranged as well and schools, mosques, churches, clubs and different societies should fight, through whatever means they have, against drugs. These campaigns should strongly show the harmful effects of drugs on human beings.

Jamal Abu Tayeh,
Amman.

مركز إعادة التأهيل

Overcrowded now, by 2000 Egypt's schools will have 1m fewer children to teach

CAIRO — At a primary school in a working-class district of Cairo, the bell rings at 11 a.m. Children in smocks pour out of the heavy iron gates. Their school day has already ended. Other children will soon be flocking in. Holidays apart — as at this moment, a break from the last two weeks of Ramadan — half of Egypt's 25,000 schools have to operate more than one shift a day.

Decades of underinvestment and surging population have strained public education beyond endurance. While parents pay out to private schools and cramming, planners worry that poor brainpower will remain a brake on growth even as Egypt's economy emerges from the long stranglehold of central planning.

The statistics are grim. Half a century after universal free education was decreed in Egypt, adult

literacy is reckoned to be just 50 per cent. Among the women of the poor southern town of Mallawi — a stronghold of the Islamist radicals who have battled Egyptian police for the past five years — that figure is only 10 per cent.

Typically, an Egyptian completes 4 and a half years of school, whereas an Israeli completes ten. The quality is poor too. A 1994 survey of 10 to 17-year-olds who had finished at least five years of school found that barely one in 20 could calculate the volume of a cube. The ratio of pupils to teachers in public schools is 45 to one. Some city classes pack 100 children to a room. With a school-age population of 16 million, even the respectable 6 per cent of GDP spent on education means only \$200 a year per pupil: in practice, less, since spending is skewed towards universities — though

even so Egyptian college students get 0.04 per cent of the money spent on their Japanese counterparts.

To make space for incoming classes, schools regularly let pupils go to the next class up regardless of merit. Similarly, teachers are promoted solely on the basis of seniority. Paid, on average, less than \$100 a month, most resort to private tutoring to make ends meet. Two-thirds of primary students and nearly all secondary pupils take outside lessons — not only to prepare for exams but to incline their teachers-cum-tutors to let them pass.

In Egypt's rigid system, exam results determine not only whether a student may qualify for higher education but which faculty he may be eligible for. Thanks to poor pay prospects, teacher-training colleges long attracted

only those who did worst in exams. Now competition to get into them has stiffened — thanks, ironically, to teachers' ability to earn from private lessons. By one government estimate, cramming has grown into a \$2 billion industry. The cost of schooling, supposedly free, is 10 per cent of the average family income per child, and rising, says Nader Fergany, an educational consultant. In effect, he says, "when the government builds a new school, it is actually building a marketplace for teachers to meet their clients."

The teaching itself, by tradition, encourages rote learning rather than critical thinking. Martial drills and physical punishment are standard. "They flatten students," says a consultant for UNICEF. "The ministry of education sees its role as socialising and disciplining children as much as teaching them."

Belatedly, the government has recognised the scale of its problem. It has tripled the education budget and built some 6,000 schools in the past five years. Colourful new textbooks contrast with the dreary stuff that children used to have to endure. The ministry now talks of basic education as a priority, and has loosened rules to allow experiments like the 120 community-run schools that UNICEF has established in some remote hamlets in upper Egypt.

Recognising that the state cannot cope, the ministry has encouraged private-sector higher education. Four private universities opened in 1996. These, it is hoped, will produce graduates better attuned to the needs of a job market saturated with incompetent holders of degrees in unwanted subjects from the 13 state universities. Demand is fierce. The American Uni-

versity in Cairo, the oldest private college in Egypt, can demand 92 per cent scores in its entry exams and fees of some \$10,000 a year.

Privatisation is not seen as an answer lower down, though. The state allows its schools to offer fee-charging "remedial classes," but remains committed to providing eight years of free basic schooling. Uprooting the practice of outside teaching has proved difficult. Nailing cramming for tax evasion has been one method, yet only 4,000 out of 400,000 teachers have registered their lessons with the taxman. Another effort failed just as miserably. Middle schools used to allow teachers' evaluations to make up 20 per cent of grade, the rest being determined by standardised tests. Finding that teachers used their 20 per cent to pressure students into private lessons, the Ministry of Education decided to make grades 100 per cent exam-determined. Though this liberated students from blackmail by their own teachers, even more of them resorted to exam cramming.

There is one hope on the horizon, however. Two decades of dropping birth rates mean that the school-age population is set to peak this year. By 2000 Egypt will have 1 million fewer children to teach.

The Economist

Randa Habib's corner

How long to the 21st century?

IT TOOK the King's personal intervention to draw the attention to the appalling state of orphans in our country. So, once more, things had to reach the King in order to find a solution away from official channels.

Jordanians have always felt confident that no matter how bad things were, their King will find a way to make things right and back on track.

But why should we always wait for the head of state to "ring the bell." What are thousands of public servants doing in a saturated labour market?

Ironically, tens of otherwise idle officials were jolted into action by the Monarch's call for change, with each of them voicing uncalculated, too-late opinions. Not by words but rather by deeds, the country should be run.

Isn't it time for all of us to mature? Can't we all, each in his field, carry out responsibilities properly, instead of sitting back and waiting for the King to discover some of our ugly realities.

The King, who expressed anger and pain at the state of the orphaned children, said he was shocked that it was happening in his country without his knowledge.

For too long a complicity of silence prevailed among the people who hold the power. They were keener on hiding the wrongdoing rather than on unveiling it. Criticism was brushed away with arrogance.

Now the King has launched, himself, the white revolution he called for a year ago.

So let us all go down to business. Let us start with the helpless.

The 1,100 orphans and displaced children will, from now on, live decently. They will be well taken care of, no doubt about that. The Welfare Institutes and the Ministry of Social Affairs know that the King will keep an eye on those innocent children.

Maybe it is time to look into our system of adoption. So many people who are not blessed with children would give anything to adopt a child and give him/her the love and attention that no institution, even the best one, can give them.

Our next goal should be the homes for the elderly and the mentally retarded.

A commission should quickly and discreetly investigate the state of those homes. I am sure they will have a lot to report on their state.

As for the so many other departments, should we wait for the King to tour them before they acquire the efficiency and the professionalism that one expects in a modern country on the eve of the 21st century?

Israelis unleash dogs on Hizbollah fighters

By Shyam Bhatia

NABATIYEH — The Israeli army has unleashed a bizarre new weapon against Hizbollah in South Lebanon. Worried at the number of men lost on missions, the elite Egoz commando unit is using rot-killers to hunt down Hizbollah fighters hiding in the border zone.

The dogs are trained to find enemy forces and pin them down until they are picked up by the commandos. Lebanese elders in Nabatiyeh say their men are more fearful of facing 100 pounds of hostile canine flesh than Israelis in olive fatigues. Hizbollah officials say it is clear from Israeli army radio transmissions that the dogs are trained to kill. "We have instructed our people to carry poisoned meat when they go on missions," said one.

The Israelis are not concerned about complaints from animal rights organisations. They feel the loss of life has been so high that risking a dog's life is the price to be paid in order to save soldiers.

"A war of wits is going on in South Lebanon between the Israeli army and the Islamic resistance," says U.N. force spokesman Timor Goksul.

"Initially, the resistance used cable-controlled roadside bombs. Later there came radio-controlled roadside bombs, which meant someone with a CB radio could use it as a detonating mechanism. "The Israelis used electronic countermeasures to set off the bombs prematurely, but Hizbollah has introduced its own counter-plays."

Hizbollah's latest tactic is to hide bombs inside fibre-



Rottweiler — the latest weapon in Israel's arsenal

glass rocks that Israeli road patrols find almost impossible to detect. Most vulnerable are the Egoz foot patrols, which are sent out daily to flush out Hizbollah forces.

At the Ram Bam Hospital in northern Israel, doctors have renamed the orthopaedic ward after the Egoz unit because of the high number of commandos brought in for treatment. Last month, to raise morale, the Israeli army decided to lift the veil of secrecy about Egoz. Israeli journalists were taken to South Lebanon to interview the young, heavily armed soldiers in battlefield camouflage. But the publicity angered soldiers' families, who were not aware the men were being sent on such dangerous missions.

"I never asked my son what he was doing in Lebanon, but when I saw him on television I was stunned," the mother of one soldier was quoted as telling Israeli reporters. "Since then I have had many sleepless nights. The army made a mistake by exposing this."

The casualties in Lebanon have added to the problems caused by low morale among Israeli soldiers. Officers warn of a rising number of desertions and poor motivation.

One idea being discussed is to screen the video film of the assassination of Yasser Arafat's late deputy, Abu Jihad, killed by Israeli commandos in his Tunis villa. The operation was filmed by a member of the hit team, and army commanders believe it would do wonders for morale if it were screened on national TV.

At the peak of the intifada the Israeli army screened a film depicting undercover army units operating in the occupied territories in an attempt to raise soldiers' morale and cause panic among the enemy.

The Observer

Fighting rages in Sudan

(Continued from page 1)

of the attacks. Gen. Ahmad said "intensive shelling was unleashed on the Sudanese town of Bazi from all directions as cover for an assault by heavy machinery in which 12 tanks took part."

The spokesman said the Ugandans also used rebel Tuksi-controlled East Zaire to "ensure free movement of their troops." Rebels trying to oust Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko have captured a large part of the country's eastern region.

Gen. Ahmad noted that the Sudanese areas currently being attacked were held by the rebel SPLA until 1994 when they were recaptured in a major offensive by Sudanese government forces.

Sudanese Information Minister Al Tayeb Ibrahim Mohamed Khair had said

earlier that "the large number of tanks and heavy artillery used in the attack demonstrate the involvement of Kampala."

The charges were denied by Mr. Arman, who said the SPLA had long had access to heavy weapons and described the government's accusations as a "naïve attempt to explain their defeat."

The SPLA has been fighting for the past 13 years in a bid to free the largely Christian and animist south of Sudan from domination by the Arabised, Islamic north. On Sunday, the SPLA said they had captured Kaya and that they were advancing on the southern town of Juba.

"The SPLA forces launched a simultaneous attack on Kaya and the Yei-Juba road and captured Kaya town. Our forces are

three kilometres from Yei town. We will capture it at any time," Mr. Arman told Reuters in Eritrea.

Kaya, west of the Nile, is only 30 kilometres north of the Uganda border, and 70 kilometres east of Yei.

Mr. Arman said the rebel forces had also attacked Morobo, and had captured Gumul garrison on the Yei-Juba road. The headquarters of the National Tobacco Company near Gumul was also in SPLA hands, he said.

The rebel claim was the first indication in several weeks of the progress of the offensive, in which the opposition captured two towns on the eastern Ethiopian border. Sudan has accused neighbours Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda of fighting alongside the rebels, who want to pressure the Khartoum government and spark a popular uprising to topple the rule of Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir.

'Missile downed TWA plane'

(Continued from page 1)

in the disaster. Investigators say a missile remains one of three theories, along with a bomb or mechanical failure.

The paper also said tapes to be released later this week by the Federal Aviation Administration suggest a projectile moving at 2,400 kilometres per hour was on a collision course with the plane just before it exploded over the ocean during a flight to Paris.

It did not give details of the type of tapes it said would be released.

The report said "compelling testimony" indicated a missile hit the plane on the right side, forward of the wing, passing through the fuselage without exploding.

"The source of the missile remains unclear, with speculation centering on either a terrorist attack or friendly fire, possibly a secret navy weapons test gone wrong," the paper said.

Investigators say an explosion in the plane's nearly empty center fuel tank broke the huge aircraft in half.

The cause of that explosion has not been officially declared, but James Sanders, a private investigator who assisted the newspaper's inquiry, said he believes heat from a missile was responsible.

The newspaper said Mr. Sanders, a retired police officer and writer with investigative experience who is married to a TWA employee, obtained samples of the seat fabric from crash investigation sources and had it privately analysed, coming up with the missile fuel residue finding.

The components, the paper said, were magne-

sium, silicon, aluminium, calcium, zinc and other metals, "consistent with a missile's internal components and wiring."

In Washington, officials reiterated their denial that any missile test was conducted off eastern New York at the time of the crash.

"It just isn't true. There was no missile firing at that time. It's been looked at and looked at, and nothing has changed," one unidentified navy official told the newspaper.

He referred all other questions to the FBI, which is investigating the crash with the NTSB.

The paper quoted James Kallstrom, assistant director of the FBI and its chief investigator of the explosion, as confirming that the reddish residue was found on seats — but denying that it had anything to do with missiles.

"There's a logical explanation but I'm not going to get into it," Mr. Kallstrom said in an interview with the paper on Friday.

Mr. Kallstrom told the Associated Press early Monday that he could not comment because he had not yet seen the Press-Enterprise story.

In November, he angrily denounced the friendly fire theory as "pure, unadulterated nonsense," and NTSB Chairman Jim Hall called it "unfounded and irresponsible."

Navy officers and former officers argue that because a ship's crew and hundreds of other people in the communications network would know within minutes of such a missile firing, there is no way it could be concealed from Congress, the public and the news media, especially for months afterward.

By Maggie Fox Reuter

LONDON — No august university is backing them, no museum or entrepreneur has taken the plunge, but a motley grouping of scientists and fossil hunters hope to create a real-life "Jurassic park" using mummified dinosaur eggs — if they can just raise the cash. Desperately strapped and unable to continue their research without more money, the assorted palaeontologists and collectors are making a difficult sacrifice by auctioning off two of their precious eggs.

"We have outrageous debts and the money will go to clear those debts and fund the project," said Terry Manning, a fossil dealer and restorer who helped found the dinosaur embryo project.

The eggs, discovered in China's Henan province, are especially well-preserved. Unlike dinosaur eggs that decorate the mantle of many an enthusiast, these fossils contain dinosaur embryos so intact that not only are their tiny bones clearly visible, but some of the soft tissue survives.

"They are two of the most complete and by far the best preserved eggs with embryos of any dinosaur to be discovered," Mr. Manning said.

"They represent the absolute miracle of the natural world's abilities to preserve its past for millions of years," they also conceal what Mr. Manning believes could be a scientific breakthrough. He has found evidence that the minuscule embryos went through several generations of teeth — before they even hatched.

"It appears that baby dinosaurs, during their development within the egg, shed their first-generation teeth and some of their second-generation teeth," Mr. Manning said.

"They hatched out wearing their third set of dentures," Mr. Manning said.

Mr. Manning and the scientists who work with him have no idea why this might be. It is one of the reasons they are so keen to continue their research.

Mr. Manning has struck a deal with auctioneers Phillips

in New York to sell the two eggs, about the size of very large goose eggs, on Dec. 14. He hopes to raise \$800,000.

David Herskowitz of Phillips said the eggs were so unusual that he did not know how much they would sell for. "We were careful not to put a price tag on it," he said.

But he said each egg could bring anything up to \$300,000.

"This is the first time that an embryonic dinosaur egg has been sold that has been studied and described by palaeontologists," Mr. Herskowitz said.

"We are hoping that an institution will buy it such as a museum or a university — or that a philanthropist will buy it and donate it to a museum."

Mr. Manning first bought the eggs, nearly 60 in total, from a freelance trader in 1992, and developed unique methods for examining and preserving them. About 15 of the eggs have skeletal remains inside.

The two eggs to be auctioned are from the same nest and have been identified as belonging to a therizinosaur, a two-legged dinosaur that lived in the upper cretaceous period, 75 million years ago. It walked on two legs and had powerful arms with three clawed fingers on each hand.

Mr. Manning thinks the eggs are well-enough preserved to extract DNA from them. Such a delicate undertaking has never been documented as successful — although Chinese scientists claimed to have done so last year.

Extraction of dinosaur DNA from bloodsucking insects preserved in amber featured in Michael Crichton's best-selling novel and film "Jurassic Park".

In Crichton's fictionalised account, a wealthy entrepreneur hires scientists who use the DNA to clone living dinosaurs.

This is theoretically possible, says palaeontologist Arthur Cruickshank, a collaborator on the dinosaur embryo project. But right now, there is no way to find out.

"We have colleagues who can extract DNA," he said.

"Somewhere in one of those

eggs we have just got to be able to find DNA." Simply having dinosaur DNA to study would extraordinarily useful, as scientists know very little about the biology of the extinct animals.

"We are kind of in limbo, because we've taken the science about as far as it can go without putting a lot more time into it. We've been trying to raise funds to do the research since 1995 without success," Mr. Cruickshank added.

Ken Joysey, former director of the Museum of Zoology at Cambridge University, retired before he could press for the university to buy the eggs. "It's wonderful material. The best specimens are the best-preserved embryonic dinosaurs in existence," he said.

But getting a university to undertake such a project was "a lengthy and chancy business" that could take years, he added.

The four-member team put some of the eggs on display in 1995 in an attempt to attract funding, and still send some of the collection to museums. Researchers at the University of North Carolina are, for example, making chemical studies of one.

Mr. Cruickshank and Mr. Manning said efforts to get government sponsorship had so far failed. Laboratories did exist that could do the needed research but the team wanted to do it themselves.

"We're not going to hand over our material to other people to work on, no matter who they are," Mr. Cruickshank said.

The buyers will be free to experiment on the eggs but it was considered more likely they would be used for display. Serious science, Mr. Cruickshank said, would require samples from many different eggs.

"We have put a lot of time in on these things. Just to hand it over and say 'look here, old chaps, enjoy' — human nature ain't like that."

"Dammit, we want the fun. That's basically it. I'd be very fed up if I thought somebody else was going to work on it."

Palestinian negotiators quit en masse

(Continued from page 1)

ment and swallow up more of their nearby lands.

"The soldiers and settlers insist on persecuting us even in our own homes, but we will fight them," said Naim Daana, a resident.

Earlier Monday, about 20 Palestinian youths threw stones and empty bottles at Israeli soldiers who set up a checkpoint at the entrance to the village of Beit Omar outside Hebron. The soldiers responded with tear-gas.

Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo, meanwhile, warned of a possible repetition of the violence that greeted Mr. Netanyahu's opening of a new entrance to a tunnel in Arab East Jerusalem last September.

The policy of Mr. Netanyahu and his govern-

ment will lead us to the abyss, will lead us to very dangerous things which we are all trying to avoid," Mr. Abed Rabbo told Israel Radio.

An Israeli official said Israel would not go ahead with the nine-per cent pull-back so long as Palestinians rejected it. Mr. Levy said he made clear to Mr. Abbas that Israel would not reconsider building the settlement near negotiate the West Bank pullback.

Mr. Arafat's Cabinet Secretary Ahmad Abdul Rahman warned that negotiations were "at a dead end and in real danger."

"We have sure information that the Israeli government is preparing for an imminent clash with the Palestinian people to impose its decisions on them by force," he said. Mr. Levy earlier Monday

acknowledged deep problems in the peace process and called on Palestinians to lower their expectations.

"Israel and the Palestinians differ totally in their vision of the peace process," Mr. Levy said in an interview on Israel Radio.

But he warned the Palestinians from turning to unrest in response to the Israel moves, saying: "Israel will not be held hostage to threats of violence. If there is violence, we will do our duty."

The pullouts are to be carried out concurrently with talks towards a final peace settlement — slated to begin next week and end in 1999 — in which the Palestinians hope to gain statehood.

It is widely assumed that autonomous areas would become part of such a state.

Kuwaiti government urged to roll back the state

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait must overhaul its bloated welfare state and boost the role of the private sector if it is to create enough jobs for a fast expanding population and balance the state finances, economists said.

"The state employs about 93 per cent of the total Kuwaiti labour force," said local economist Jassem Al Saadoun, effectively making it "the sole employer" of Kuwaitis.

"We cannot employ more (in the government) unless we go and borrow heavily. We have to find a way to cope with the situation and solve the problem," said Mr. Saadoun, who heads Al Shall Economic Consultants.

As well as employing most Kuwaitis, the government does not tax its 700,000 citizens and offers generous state handouts, including free health care and education, long-term housing loans with free land and heavy utility subsidies.

Economists say the system was sustainable at the height of the Oil boom in the 1970s and early 1980s when the state used it as a means to redistribute its wealth, and still had enough to salt away more than \$100 billion in foreign investments.

But those foreign assets have tumbled now to an estimated \$40 billion after footing the bill for the 1990-1991 Gulf war, while the government has run a public deficit of more than \$3 billion a year since then.

"It is a rich country. They say oil reserves will last 100 years... but I think it is wrong to think only about this generation," said one economist, who asked not to be named.

"You can't motivate people to work if you continue this welfare state," the economist said. "You could continue to provide or redistribute oil wealth among Kuwaitis, but you can introduce reforms to move the economy closer to a market economy."

The government regularly makes calls for the private sector to help provide jobs for the 50,000 Kuwaitis expected in the next five years to join the national labour force that now numbers 184,000.

"I think the private sector is the only way out of this dilemma," Planning Minister Ali Al Zamil, who took office in October, told parliament last month during a briefing on employment.

Economists said the government is starting to come to terms with the idea that it can no longer expand the state bureaucracy to create new jobs when many Kuwaiti officials already do not have enough to fill their time.

"(Zamil) just realised that we have 50 per cent of our total Kuwaiti labour force in hidden unemployment," said Mr. Saadoun, although the official jobless are less than two per cent of the national labour force.

A privatisation drive, involving selling stakes in companies that mainly fell

into state hands during a stock market collapse in 1982, is one way the government is reducing its role.

The sell-offs have raised \$2 billion since 1994, with a strong response from private investors, who are estimated to have assets of between \$40 billion and \$60 billion mainly held abroad.

Economists say more of that money could be repatriated to local projects. "Where there is a real, viable chance to invest money, the private sector is willing to invest," said Mr. Saadoun.

He points to the heavy oversubscription for shares when a 10 per cent stake was offered in a \$2 billion petrochemical venture now being built called Equate, which also involves foreign and state participation.

But industrialists complain that investment opportunities like Equate are few and far between, and new projects face a maze of red tape before

they receive a licence.

Kuwaitis are also reluctant to go for private sector jobs where the hours are longer, the work more demanding and often worse paid, economists argue.

Most of these jobs are carried out by Kuwait's large expatriate community of some 1.3 million people.

"The government needs to change its attitude and language towards the public sector, and be very frank with the people" that the old ways cannot continue, commented Mr. Saadoun.

IMF: Foreign investment to triple in Egypt in 1997

CAIRO (AFP) — Foreign investment in Egypt this year will triple in comparison with the previous year, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) official has forecast.

Arvin Subramanian, the IMF's representative in Cairo, told the official newspaper Al-Ahram that foreign investment will reach \$2.1 billion in the July 1996 to June 1997 financial year.

Last year foreign investment in Egypt came to \$650 million.

Foreign investment in projects will reach \$800 million while investments in financial instruments will account for another \$1.3 billion, Mr. Subramanian said.

During the first six months of this financial year, \$450 million in foreign investment went toward shares while \$200 million was used to buy treasury bonds.

During 1995/96, investment in projects reached \$600 million while investment in financial instruments came to only \$50 million.

Economic growth is the best guarantee of Gulf security — Bahraini premier

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Arab Gulf states should initiate Asian economic models to boost prosperity which is a better guarantee of stability than excessive security measures, the Bahraini premier has said in remarks here.

"Many industries moved from the country of origin to Asian countries to cut the cost of production, and eventually prices," Bahraini Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa told Kuwait's English-language

Arab Times.

"So why can't the Gulf states pave the way and create favourable circumstances to attract such industries," the premier said in an interview, also carried by its sister Arabic daily Al-Sayassah.

"Yes, stability normally precedes prosperity and in some cases leads to it. But we must not exaggerate our security arrangements at the expense of prosperity," he said, after a two-month tour of South East Asian

countries.

Arab Gulf states have spent billions of dollars on weapons deals for their military since the 1990-1991 Gulf war to protect themselves against perceived threats from Iran and Iraq.

"We must free ourselves of excessive and unnecessary security measures that would only weaken the economy and delay prosperity. We must realise that prosperity eventually leads to security and perpetuates it," he said.

He said Gulf states and the private sector have the financial reserves to promote and finance new local industry, but instead tend to focus on investment abroad.

"I believe that Bahrain is prepared to accommodate many projects through joint ventures with other Gulf countries," he said.

Bahrain is the smallest oil producer among the oil-rich Arab Gulf states and is trying to broaden its industries that now focus on refining, aluminium and banking.

Oil prices set to soar after 2005 — CGES

LONDON (AFP) — Reduced production and burgeoning demand around the world will heat up oil prices after 2005, the Centre for Global Energy Studies (CGES) has said.

The London-based research group predicted that a benchmark median of OPEC crude oil prices would fall from \$23 per barrel at the end of 1996 to \$15 in 2000.

Crude prices would rise back to \$22 in 2005 and would then surge to \$36 per barrel in 2010.

CGES said that prices would fall between now and 2000 because of increased production by non-OPEC countries.

Output would initially grow at a faster pace than demand, the CGES said. However, it predicted that by 2000 consumption would

have grown by 6.9 million barrels per day to a daily total of 78.6 million barrels.

The group predicted that non-OPEC countries would increase production by 3.4 million barrels per day between 1996 and 2001.

In addition, it said that by 1999 Iraq is expected to have increased oil exports to levels comparable to those seen prior to a worldwide embargo that was applied to the

country in 1990.

In December 1996, the United Nations allowed Iraq to resume limited oil exports for the first time since Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait on the eve of the Gulf war.

Price falls would come to an abrupt end after the turn of the century because increases in output by non-OPEC countries, which began in 1994, would peter out in 2001.

Thereafter, production would level out and would fall in a further five years' time, CGES, which is thought to be close to OPEC countries, said.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 10/03/97 19:14									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	HKD	SGD	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7028	0.6244	1.4716	121.70	1.3706	100.00	1.0000	6.5596
DE Mark	0.5875	1.0000	0.3536	0.5636	65.55	0.7363	66.34	1.0000	3.3757
GB Sterling	1.6016	2.7273	1.0000	1.6609	160.33	2.1982	271.72	1.0000	9.2002
CHF Franc	0.6756	1.1000	0.3012	1.0000	93.75	1.1257	113.91	1.0000	4.7167
JP Yen	0.0082	1.5384	0.0156	0.0176	1.0000	0.0094	0.0094	0.0094	0.0094
CA Dollar	0.7273	1.2500	0.4545	0.5000	106.38	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
HK Dollar	0.0078	1.2800	0.0078	0.0087	7.76	0.0078	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0000	0.0006	0.0006	1336.34	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006
FR Franc	0.1524	0.1524	0.0244	0.0244	16.66	0.1524	0.1524	0.1524	0.1524
FR Franc	0.1741	0.2964	0.1088	0.1088	25.8213	0.2385	0.2385	0.2385	0.2385

Energy		
Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	19.55	19.75
WTI	21.55	21.55
Boys	19.55	19.75
Debut	19.55	19.75
UL Gas	198.00	198.00

Mid-East Currencies				
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4543	0.1665	0.30279
EW Dinar	3.2930	5.61167	2.05577	4.85201
IR Rial	1.3750	2.3750	0.8750	1.5750
CY Pound	1.9594	3.336	1.2225	2.884

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	358.4	359.8
Silver (oz's)	5.47	5.52
Platinum (oz's)	377.8	378.9
Palladium (oz's)	165.2	166.5
CU (3 Months)	2370	2376
Lead (3 Months)	1254	1257
Lead (3 Months)	675	675
Aluminium	900	900

Currency Day-Rates (B/L)					
Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-9-	-12-
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.20	5.57	5.58	5.58	5.58
JPY	0.31	0.36	0.40	0.42	0.44
DEM	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58
FRF	3.16	3.22	3.31	3.31	3.36
ITL	7.20	7.25	7.06	6.97	6.92

Main Equity Indices						
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low
New York	DOW JONES	7027.82	28.93	0.38	7032.06	6993.19
London	FT-SE 100	4438.8	16.8	0.38	4440.8	4421.6
Paris	CAC-40	2708.21	0.53	0.02	2708.21	2708.21
Frankfurt	DAX	3308.07	30.27	0.91	3312.32	3297.2

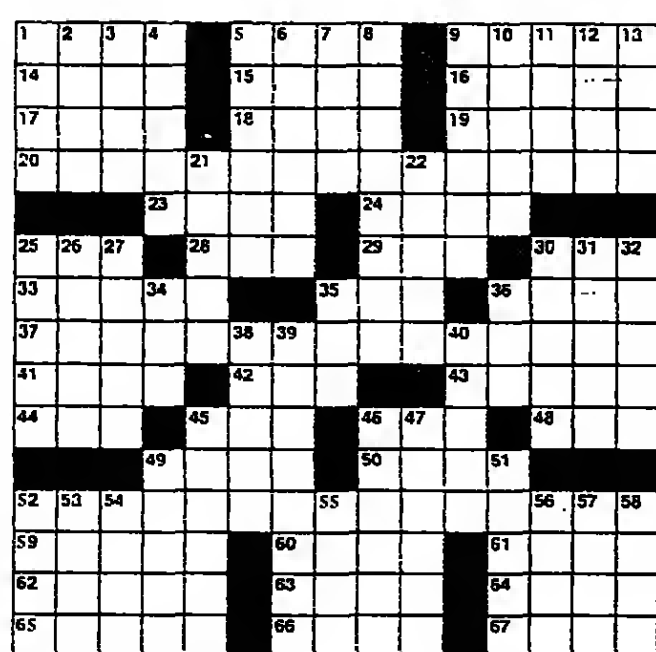
Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lb)	198.83	Spot
Cocoa (c/lb)	1346	Spot
Sugar (c/lb)	310.7	Spot
Wheat (c/lb)	153	Spot
Soy (c/lb)	23.79	Spot
Tea (c/lb)	125	Spot
Barley (c/lb)	0	Spot
Wheat (c/lb)	010	Spot

JOD Cross Rates		
Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
DE Mark	1.1351	1.1408
DE Mark	0.4137	0.4158
CHF Franc	0.6756	0.6777
FR Franc	0.1226	0.1232
JP Yen	0.0078	0.0078
NL Guilder	0.3674	0.3692
IT Lira	0.4129	0.415

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- 1 Clothes
 - 5 Assistance
 - 9 In a state of wonderment
 - 14 Surpassing the ordinary
 - 15 Of an age
 - 16 Wept
 - 17 Labyrinth
 - 18 Melody
 - 19 Thrashed
 - 20 Galactic phenomenon
 - 23 On the level
 - 24 Fortids
 - 25 Not close
 - 28 Finesse
 - 29 Islet
 - 30 Govt. gp.
 - 33 Foreigner
 - 35 Sick
 - 36 Hebrew month
 - 37 Imaginary extent of space
 - 41 Star follower
 - 42 Home away from home
 - 43 — orange (spiny tree)
 - 44 Pig's place
 - 45 Promos
 - 46 Mr. Onassis
 - 48 Cut off
 - 49 Beginner's verb in Latin
 - 50 Porter of music
 - 52 Galactic group
 - 59 Butterbeans
 - 60 Christmas
 - 61 Faction
 - 62 Make a speech
 - 63 Fuss
 - 64 Actress Moran
 - 65 Goods for sale
 - 66 British gun
 - 67 Requirement



by Vivian O. Collins

SLAY	MARIS	CAFES
T.O.R.E	A.E.R.O	O.B.E.S.E
T.C.I.O.N	J.O.E.L	O.R.D.E.R
R.U.S.S.I.A.N	V.I.D.K.A	
S.E.E.M	A.N.A	S.I.P
	S.P.A.N.I.S.H	R.I.C.E
O.P.P	A.I.W.O.L	O.V.A.T.E
T.U.R.N	R.E.D	B.A.S.E.M.A.N
B.L.O.A.T	T.E.D.I.S	E.L.D
S.W.I.S.S	C.H.I.E.S.E	
E.L.L	A.R.I	E.A.S.E
	D.I.A.N.I.S.H	P.I.A.S.T.R.Y
B.E.B.O.P	S.T.A.R	T.O.N.E
B.R.O.W.S	E.L.K.O	O.V.E.N
S.I.A.O.N.E	S.E.E.P	F.E.S.S

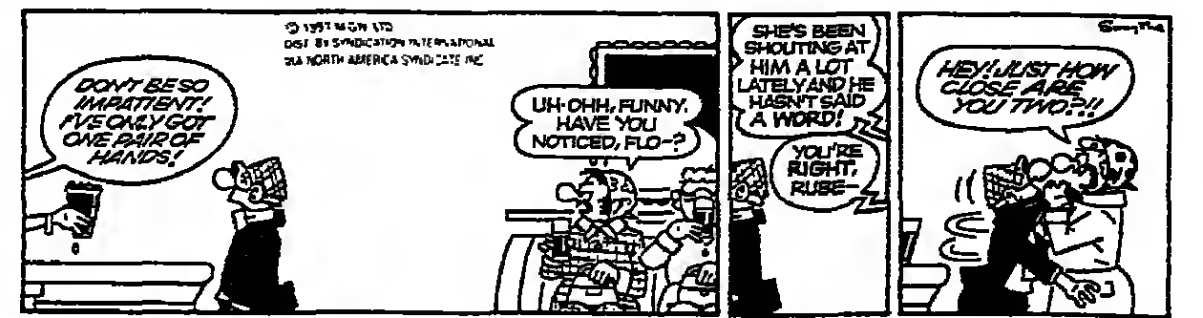
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- DOWN
- 1 Certain office worker
 - 2 Ring stone
 - 3 Suburb of Cairo
 - 4 Public spat
 - 5 Pistol
 - 6 Straying
 - 7 Hideaway
 - 8 Ump's cry
 - 9 Emphasis
 - 10 Captures
 - 11 Japanese aborigine
 - 12 Sunburn result
 - 13 Old Norse poetry
 - 21 Charles — Hughes
 - 22 Arrests
 - 23 Data
 - 26 Vigilant
 - 27 The life of —
 - 30 Perfect
 - 31 Ship's load
 - 32 Move slowly
 - 33 Author Fleming
 - 35 Sounds of delight
 - 38 Kind of wave
 - 39 Trices
 - 40 French soldier
 - 45 Entertains
 - 46 Give consent
 - 47 Applicator of a kind
 - 49 Lessen
 - 51 German city
 - 52 Incandescence
 - 53 Italian money
 - 54 Sharif
 - 55 Cheer
 - 56 Spare, e.g.
 - 57 Adams of entertainment
 - 58 Tear apart

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Talk over with close friends today what your mutual wishes are and plan how best to gain them by a combined effort. Later this evening will be good for consulting with fellow associates and develop a plan of action.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get your surroundings in better order today and you can become more proficient at your career activities. Later this evening make the effort to get out of town with your loved ones and have some fun together.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Study your home well today and know how to improve it so that everyone under your roof will feel warm and pleasant living there. Get a lot done later this evening by combining efforts with close friends.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) If you want to have recreation today let it be within your home and entertain nicely there, so that everyone who comes in will feel welcome. Later this evening you can get together with close friends and enjoys yourselves.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Add something cheerful and complementary to any correspondence you send out today and this will make a good first impression upon the recipient. Keep your spirits high later this evening by being with your loved ones at home.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get your possessions improved today and impress others favourably by making others feel more at ease in your residence. Plan to have more harmony with fellow associates and you will generate greater appreciation.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Know what your personal desires are today and go after them with full force, thereby making a bigwig respond favourably. Get into activities with your friends later this evening which are profitable and prosperous.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be more affectionate today with your relatives and your mate and be happier together. Rest and relax in your home later this evening since the next could be quite hectic and you want to be prepared for every possible condition.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Discuss plans for trips and jaunts with others and you will have a wonderful time together. Solve a difficulty by making a necessary revision of your course of action and thereby you can become quite successful.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) See bigwigs today who would be willing to go along with your plans for completing your career activities. Be happy with the one you love and do something special for him or her which will be very much appreciated.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get the aid of a good friend today who can introduce you to persons you admire at a distance and know them better so that you can gain the advice you could use. Later tonight go out on the town with your loved ones.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Study the promises you have made today and make sure you are keeping them to the best of your ability so that you won't lose face with others. Later tonight you can meet with knowledgeable people and gain some insight.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper.

Saudi trade delegation to visit Jordan Saturday

AMMAN (Petra) — Hamad Al Zamel, chairman of the Saudi Chamber of Commerce, is due here Saturday at the head of a large Saudi Arabian economic delegation at the invitation of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce, according to an announcement Monday by federation chairman Haidar Mu'ad.

The 40-member delegation, which plans to stay four days in Jordan, will be meeting with businessmen and discussing further cooperation

in joint investments and bolstering trade ties between Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Mr. Mu'ad noted that the Saudi visitors include representatives of industrial firms, and service companies in various fields, according to Mr. Mu'ad who noted that the delegation will attend the opening of the first Saudi industrial exhibition to be held at the International Fair Centre in Marj Al Hamam district. On Sunday, the delegation will hold meetings with representatives of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce to discuss economic and trade links, he said.

The Jordanian-Saudi trade has grown over the past few years and the Saudi markets now constitute one of the most important markets for Jordanian products. Mr. Mu'ad pointed out that Jordan's exports to Saudi Arabia rose from JD70.3 million in 1995 to JD13.4 million in the first 11 months of 1996.

Mr. Mu'ad said that the talks on Sunday are expected to pave the way for further bolstering of mutual trade. Saudi businessmen in the past few years have embarked on major joint investments in the Kingdom.

Will decoupling save Europe if Wall Street dives?

LONDON (R) — Europe's stock markets happily climbed aboard the Wall Street bandwagon as it began driving upwards more than two years ago and have been carried higher by the U.S. market's advance ever since.

But as fears grow that the Dow might be heading towards a precipice, Europe's investors are suddenly hoping that they are not, after all, mere passengers on a U.S.-driven journey.

With several analysts warning of a substantial Wall Street correction this year, the issue of how much European equities have 'decoupled' from the U.S. locomotive is being anxiously examined.

"The key concern that people have is that if the U.S. goes down, what will that do to Europe?" said Richard Davidson, Euro-

pean equity strategist at Morgan Stanley in London. If European markets remain closely tied to the U.S. one, then a Wall Street plunge would drag Europe with it. But some analysts believe the two areas have decoupled enough to shelter Europe from the worst of the damage if the Dow loses its footing.

Supporters of the decoupling argument point to the divergence between the positions of Europe and the United States in the economic cycle.

U.S. data shows continued economic strength and most analysts expect the next move in interest rates there to be upwards. Meanwhile, Germany, economic powerhouse of Europe, struggles with slack output and rising unemployment.

"The gap between U.S. and German bond yields is exceptionally high, largely

reflecting the different cyclical positions in the U.S. and Germany," said Bill O'Neill, international investment strategist at HSBC James Capel.

This divergence in bond performance has pushed European and U.S. equity/bond yield ratios in different directions. And the higher bond yields are compared to equities, the more vulnerable stock markets are to investors switching into bonds.

At the time of the 1987 market crash, yield ratios looked stretched in both Europe and the United States and the current difference in the ratios "argues for far greater divergence" in equity performance on either side of the Atlantic, the Financial Times has said.

Mr. Davidson at Morgan Stanley said the correlation between U.S. and European equity market performance

had already waned considerably and this could help Europe weather storms ahead.

"The markets have already significantly decoupled," he said. "Although I'm bearish on Europe in absolute terms, I'd expect it to outperform the U.S. if Wall Street goes down."

Mr. Davidson said the correlation between equity markets in the U.S. and Europe had fallen to its lowest since the mid-1970s.

Corporate restructuring in Europe would help support the performance of its equity markets, Mr. Davidson said. "The U.S. powered ahead because of its corporate restructuring story. Now we've got the European restructuring story coming through and Europe should outperform the U.S."

Mr. O'Neill also believes Europe would outperform a falling Wall Street but said

everything hinged on the strength of the dollar.

"If the dollar holds up solidly, our belief would be that European equity markets should outperform a weakening U.S. equity market," Mr. O'Neill said.

But Ian Scott, European equity strategist at Lehman Brothers, said that although he did not foresee a U.S. tumble, it would take Europe with it if it did materialise.

"We're not in the doom-and-gloom camp on the U.S.," he said. "But we wouldn't see Europe sheltered if Wall Street falls."

Britain presents a special case, analysts say — it is closer to the U.S. in terms of its position in the economic cycle but its bond market performance has been more closely correlated to German bonds than U.S. treasuries.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Nabulsi reveals disagreement with IMF on some reforms

JORDANIAN OFFICIALS were in agreement with the view of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the general outline of the reform (programme) but were often in disagreement over the details, the possibility of implementation and the magnitude of the reform measures, former Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) governor Mohammad Said Nabulsi has revealed.

He said there were times when Jordanian officials differed totally with the views of the IMF representatives, especially regarding foreign trade, but had to implement their demands reluctantly. The former CBI chief referred to the reduction of customs on imports and indicated that the speed towards achieving that requirement "also made us move fast to inflate and speed up the sales tax which was a part of the adjustment programme." He said that the reduction of customs was a subject that should have been examined very carefully.

Dr. Nabulsi stressed that 90 per cent of the adjustment programme and its requirements were implemented "with our full conviction" but there were some measures that had to be implemented "against our will." Giving an example, he said the CBI saw the interest rate policy, which was regulated by the Central Bank, to be a wrong principle and agreed with the IMF that interest rates should be left to market forces. As such, the CBI's role became an indirect supervision on the banking system and credit extension.

"We were surprised after a while that the IMF was not happy with the floating interest rates and our indirect control and requested that interest rates be raised because they were less than the rate of inflation," Dr. Nabulsi said. Accordingly, "the Central Bank had to intervene directly again despite our disagreement with the IMF on this matter," the former governor added. However, he wondered: How much further should we keep the amplification of raising interest rates? Dr. Nabulsi affirmed that the dinar's stability at present is better than any time since 1993 when it was stabilised and he asserted that there is no suggestion from any party to devalue the currency.

The former CBI governor said he has no regrets whatsoever and, to the contrary, he is happy that the adjustment programme has achieved good and positive results. "I honestly say that we have implemented most of the programme willingly because our objective was the reform and the progress to the level where, one-day, we can tell the IMF: 'Thank you very much,'" Dr. Nabulsi stressed (Al Dustouri).

Cabinet approves \$36m of grants to finance environment projects

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Council of Ministers has approved financial aid to Jordan totalling \$36.85 million to finance 10 projects undertaken by the Jordanian Environment Protection Corporation (JEPC).

A JEPC official told Al Rai daily that the Montreal Fund for the Protection of the Ozone Layer offered Jordan \$10 million to finance the cost of replacing materials used in the local industry and considered harmful to the ozone with ozone-friendly materials.

He said that another two

grants were for financing a new garbage dump that came in the form of equipment and trucks and for recycling solid waste for use in the manufacture of fertilisers and the generation of electric power through the produced methane gas.

Other grants covered the costs of studies on ways to prevent contamination of underground water resources, the protection of the Al Azraq and Dana wild life reserves and their development by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature.

U.S. fast food gets poor marks

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Fast food restaurants, now established features on the American landscape, have lately suffered a slump in their customer satisfaction ratings, a national survey has disclosed.

The American Society for Quality Control (ASQC) said customers gave the fast food, pizza and carryout restaurant industry the lowest score of 27 private sector operations evaluated in its study.

The society said the decline could reflect a slowdown in delivery times or consumer concern with fat content and calories.

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), prepared jointly by the ASQC and the University of Michigan Business, gave the fast food industry a rating of 66 on a 0-

100 scale, down from 70 reported in 1995.

The data had been collected in the fourth quarters of 1996 and 1994.

"Customer satisfaction has slid marginally for other retail industries as well," the study found.

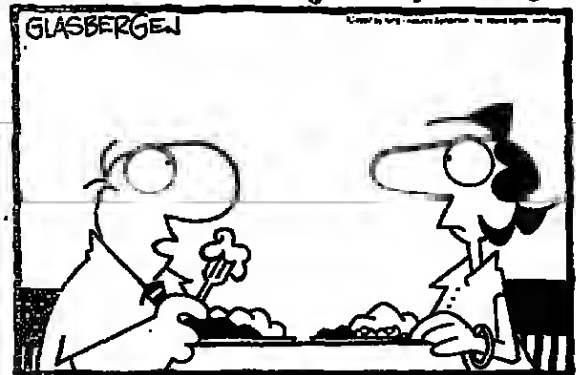
"Satisfaction with the department and discount store industry is down 1.3 per cent to 74, as is that for supermarkets, according to evaluations by customers," it said, adding:

"But none have taken the fast food restaurant tumble of 5.9 per cent to an ACSI of 66 in the past year."

Warren University of Michigan Professor Claes Fornell: "In the long run, declining satisfaction does not bode well for the fast food restaurant industry or for retailing."

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SIRIYASANI											
TELEPHONE: 507171 / 507179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 10/03/1997											
PART 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	SO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE	CHANGE		
269.000	205.000	ARAB BANK	14.4	1.33	9	240	63140	265.50	263.00	2.50	-
2.100	1.900	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	5	0.00	36	71694	150053	1.92	1.94	0.02	+
3.650	2.900	BANK OF JORDAN	10.7	0.00	6	2750	82338	3.00	2.97	0.03	-
3.610	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.2	0.08	2	500	1143	2.39	2.29	0.10	-
5.150	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.6	0.14	4	1167	5484	4.67	4.70	0.03	+
2.950	2.440	JOR. INVEST. BANK	20.0	0.00	7	935	2547	2.74	2.76	0.02	+
1.090	0.840	JOR. CULF BANK	5.1	0.14	2	950	817	0.86	0.86	0.00	-
4.120	3.480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	18.5	0.00	5	1850	3272	3.83	3.85	0.02	+
3.800	3.000	JOR. INV. F.N. BANK	17.0	0.00	2	1000	3150	3.15	3.15	0.00	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 198.58	CHNG: -0.58	73	86046	237844					
2.800	1.870	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.3	0.10	5	700	1310	1.89	1.87	0.02	-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 119.27	CHNG: -0.10	5	700	1310					
1.830	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.4	7.27	15	12050	19928	1.65	1.65	0.00	-
2.800	2.090	SHIPPING LINES	10.2	0.00	20	8000	9197	1.14	1.14	0.00	-
1.540	1.080	JOINT. PORTFOLIO	5.1	0.00	15	16500	16436	1.99	1.00	0.01	+
1.050	0.820	REAL ESTATE INV.	22.2	3.73	15	500	500	0.46	0.47	0.01	+
1.800	1.410	JOINT. EQUIP. RENT. INV.	9	0.00	5	1050	6300	1.30	1.40	0.10	+
2.200	1.390	WLD. EAST INV. FUND	60.3	0.00	5	4500	14846	3.40	3.33	0.07	-
3.720	3.130	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	13.2	0.01	7	4450	2004	0.98	0.98	0.00	-
1.220	0.960	ZARQA EDUCATION	9	0.00	5	2050	2049	1.80	1.80	0.00	-
2.230	1.690	UNICED CO.	8.5	0.11	11	11200	1929	1.75	1.77	0.02	+
1.290	0.750	UNION LAND DEV.	8	0.00	4	2550					
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 106.48	CHNG: -0.34	89	63400	93641					
3.730	3.060	JOB. CEMENT FACT.	20.0	2.87	5	412	1438	3.51	3.49	0.02	-
3.500	2.710	JOR. PROSPERITY MINES	35.5	0.00	2	523	2725	3.30	3.30	0.00	-
6.100	4.950	ARAB POTASH	10.5	3.28	7	3100	10880	6.05	6.10	0.05	+
10.400	8.720	JOB. PETROL. REFINERY	10.2	7.91	6	573	5769	10.07	10.11	0.04	+
1.590	1.150	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	62.2	0.00	4	1250	1753	1.41	1.40	0.01	-
3.460	2.650	INDUSTRIAL COMH. AGH.	34.7	0.00	1	500	258	2.58	2.58	0.00	-
2.300	1.040	ARAB PHARM. IND.	20.6	5.33	15	3300	12709	3.78	3.75	0.03	-
2.310	1.570	JOR. PIPES MANFACT.	8.9	7.50	1	150	240	1.61	1.60	0.01	-
6.780	4.250	DAR ALDANA OV. INV.	13.1	4.18	1	300	1437	4.79	4.79	0.00	-
1.680	1.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	106	201050	121470	1.59	1.59	0.00	-
1.020	0.840	NATIONAL INDUS.	9.9	0.38	9	1750	2128	2.54	2.54	0.00	-
1.540	0.910	INTERMED. PETROL. CHEM.	9	0.00	9	3000	3005	1.00	1.00	0.00	-
9.120	2.130	NATL. CABLE WIRE. NPAC	14.3	0.00	3	5500	12300	2.35	2.35	0.00	-
1.470	0.670	JOR. SULPHUR-CEM	9	0.00	6	2750	1870	0.69	0.68	0.01	-
1.670	1.080	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	27.9	0.00	14	5100	7627	1.50	1.49	0.01	-
1.440	0.750	JOINT. MOUL. INDUS.	5.1	0.00	16	7100	12018	1.68	1.69	0.01	+
1.820	1.140	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	16.8	0.00	8	2200	2949	1.34	1.34	0.00	-
1.270	0.840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	24.4	0.00	6	1650	1485	0.89	0.90	0.01	+
2.400	1.750	EL - DAY READY PEAR	9	0.00	6	2250	3789	1.85	1.84	0.01	-
1.460	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	27.5	0.00	10	8000	9370	1.17	1.17	0.00	-
1.470	0.930	UNION CH. & VEG.	24.1	0.00	7	7250	7110	0.98	0.98	0.00	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 116.57	CHNG: +0.24	239	259788	229580					
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 155.73	CHNG: -0.24	406	409934	562373					
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 10/03/1997											
1.780	1.500	JOR. TRADE FAIR	13.6	0.00	2	750	380	0.50	0.51	0.01	+
850	800	UNION INV. FUND	67.0	0.00	23	54000	10597	0.69	0.70	0.01	+
840	370	ARAB F.N. INVEST.	9	0.00	16	29950	17842	0.42	0.43	0.01	+
640	200	JOR. INDUS. MATCH-JERICO	9	0.00	5	3800	820	0.21	0.22	0.01	+
140	510	ARAB FOOD & VEG.	8	0.00	4	4500	2665	0.58	0.60	0.02	+
1.690	1.300	NATL. CALZORTE	8	0.00	3	1600	2225	1.37	1.39	0.02	+
890	440	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	5	14500	6670	0.45	0.46	0.01	+
810	510	NATL. TEXTILE	8	0.00	10	1115	2100	1.15	1.15	0.00	-
860	400	NATL. WOL. ENG. MANICO	8	0.00	33	96350	41959	0.42	0.44	0.02	+
860	430	NATL. OILS & WOODS	8	0.00	12	47600	29036	0.61	0.61	0.00	-
990	720	JORDAN SIZEL	8	0.00	13	19700	14696	0.74	0.75	0.01	+
100	430	ARAB ELEC. INDUS.	8	0.00	2	400	204	0.51	0.51	0.00	-
750	600	KIDRAT PHARM. 75	8	0.00	4	9800	3435	0.61	0.61	0.00	-
1.320	1.020	UNION TOBACCO 75	8	0.00	2	300	225	1.02	1.00	0.02	+
770	570	SABZ PHARM. 65	8	0.00	3	9800	2362	0.60	0.60	0.00	-
680	390	INDUS. KRG.	27.1	0.00	30	45900	19859	0.42	0.44	0.02	+
1.140	0.760	INDUS. CERAMIC	8	0.00	3	2500	2000	0.80	0.80	0.00	-
850	590	NATL. HOUSING	8	0.00	1	250	175	0.70	0.70	0.00	-
1.020	0.800	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	61.1	0.00	1	100	87	0.90	0.87	0.03	-
950	530	INTL. EAST COMPLEX	6.2	0.00	36	74300	50877	0.67	0.70	0.03	+
GRAND TOTAL					201	418200	202239				

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



Jordan's soccer team concludes visit to Oman today

Coach hopes to finalise lineup in 2nd match

By Shbli Shatarat in Muscat and
Aleen Bannayan in Amman

THE HEAD COACH of the Kingdom's national soccer team hopes to finalise the lineup of his team Tuesday when Jordan meets Oman in the second friendly international which comes amidst the two teams' preparations for the Asian World Cup qualifiers next month.

The Jordanian team scored their first win in their fifth friendly match when they beat Oman 2-0 in the first encounter Sunday.

The goals were scored three minutes apart in the 51st and 54th minutes by Abdullah Abu Zameh and Amjad Taher.

For today's match head coach said play would concentrate on offence "despite the fact that the team's form showed noticeable improvement in that area in the last match."

The Kingdom's team's morale was undoubtedly boosted with the addition of seven of Al Faisali's players who include top strikers Subhi Suleiman, Jiryes Tadros and Mohammad Mahadin who was chosen best player in the Arab Champions Cup in Morocco earlier this week.

Before beating Oman Sunday Jordan had played two matches against Lebanon losing 1-0 in Beirut and drawing 0-0 in Amman.

Against the Iraqi team Jordan twice lost 1-0 in Baghdad.

The visit to Muscat is the third leg of the team's camps abroad as Jordan prepares for the Asian World Cup qualifiers against Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates which kick off in Manama, Bahrain April 8.

Other friendlies scheduled by the Jordan Soccer Federation include two matches against Syria, March 16 in Amman and March 23 in Damascus.

Jordan's Asian Group 3 qualifiers start April 8 against the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

Thirty-six Asian countries will contest the first round World Cup qualifiers and have been divided into ten groups:

Group 1: Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Taiwan.

Group 2: Iran, Syria, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan.

Group 3: United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain.

Group 4: Japan, Oman, Nepal, Macao.

Group 5: Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Yemen, Cambodia.

Group 6: South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong.

Group 7: Kuwait, Lebanon, Singapore.

Group 8: China, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Tajikistan.

Group 9: Iraq, Pakistan, Kazakhstan.

Group 10: Qatar, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines.

The 10 groups winners will qualify for the second round where the teams will be divided into two groups.

The first two from each group will then contest the Asian finals.

The first three qualify directly for the 1998 World Cup in France while the winner of a play-off between the fourth team and the Oceania Zone winner will also qualify.

The Kingdom's team includes Ahmad Abu Nasouh, Mu'taz Rishab, Mohammad Abu Daoud, Yousef Ammouri, Mohammad Khaz'ali, Abdallah Abu Zameh, Amjad Taher, Faisal Ibrahim, Isam Mahmoud, Hussein Shananeh, Ra'fat Ali, Adnan Awad, Khaled Yousef, Walid Abdul Rahman, Munir Abu Hantash, Aref Hussein, Nart Yada, Bassam Al Khatib, Ahmad Khalil, Mohammad Mahadin, Jamal Abu Abed, Subhi Suleiman, Ja'far Hanumad, Hassounah Sheikh and Jiryes Tadros.

Martinez, Williams win in Evert Cup

INDIAN WELLS,

California (R) — A pair of youngsters touted as future stars of the women's tennis circuit grabbed the spotlight at the Evert Cup Sunday, but only one came out of the second round a winner.

Sixteen-year-old American Venus Williams, who needed a wild card to get into the qualifying tournament here, upset 29th-ranked Ai Sugiyama of Japan 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Fifteen-year-old Russian Anna Kournikova, who made a splash at last year's U.S. Open with her cover-girl looks and solid groundstrokes, won her first set, but third-seeded German Anke Huber regrouped to score a 3-6, 6-2, 6-2 win over the promising teenager.

Second seed Conchita Martinez of Spain scored a relatively easy 6-4, 6-2 win over Petra Bergerow of Germany and fifth seed Iva Majoli of Croatia also moved safely into the third round with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Natasha Zvereva of Belarus.

Players performed under crystal clear blue skies and

a desert sun that saw on-court temperatures reach 109 degrees (43 C) at midday.

Williams, playing her first event of the year, looked like she would not challenge Sugiyama in the first set. But she settled down in the second, winning three successive games from 3-3 to level the match.

After splitting sets, Williams took control in the final set, securing a 5-1 lead. That's when she showed some immaturity, blowing triple match point in the seventh game by taking matters rather casually.

"I was joking around and the joke was on me," Williams said. "I don't want to do that again. It was kind of insane."

After squandering her 40-0 lead, Williams won the next game and the match on consecutive double faults by Sugiyama.

Williams later brushed off an attempt to get her to compare herself to 16-year-old Martina Hingis, who is poised to take over Steffi Graf's World No. 1 ranking.

"I never think anybody is better than me, never will,"

said the confident American.

The seventh-ranked Huber had trouble keeping the ball in play during her first set, providing Kournikova with a false sense of security.

"I think I made it very difficult for myself," Huber said of her rough start. "She hits the ball very hard and she didn't make the mistakes in the first set that she made in the second and third sets."

But Huber settled into the match, while the Russian teen began committing errors in bunches.

In the third set, Kournikova was able to recoup an early service break in the fifth game. But Huber went on to break the Russian's serve in the sixth and eighth games for the win.

Kournikova, who has only played three matches this season, racked up a total of 54 unforced errors, most over the final two sets.

"She's young and that's the way you're playing when you're young," said Huber.

Danoli heads for Gold Cup at Cheltenham

LONDON (R) — Danoli, blessed by a priest and worshipped by the Irish, could raise the roof if he lands Thursday's Cheltenham Gold Cup.

For Ireland's national hero, who recovered from a fractured fetlock to become a potential steeplechasing star, will send legions of race fans delirious with joy if he captures jump racing's most cherished prize.

But big ifs still abound for the doughty Danoli, who was blessed by the local priest in the Irish village of Bagenalstown before the biggest test of his rollercoaster career.

Captain Christy was the last novice to win chasing's blue riband back in 1974. The do-or-die Danoli has come to grief twice in six attempts over fences, not a perfect recipe for cheltenham.

But last time out he was at his very best, beating with authority two previous Gold Cup winners, Jodami and Imperial Call.

Imperial Call, the 1996 winner, also represents Ireland along with Dorans pride, like Danoli a novice of huge potential.

But Imperial Call, trained by one-legged Korean war veteran Fergie Sutherland, has been dogged by setbacks while Dorans Pride, who twice nearly died of colic, may not even run if the ground dries up too much. However, if he takes his chance and jumps well, he will be a powerful force.

The home team rely on the fast improving Coome Hill, front-running course specialist Dublin Flyer and the dual King George VI winner One Man, the enigma of the race who has never sparkled at Cheltenham.

The great event has always eluded prolific master trainer Martin Pipe. This time he thinks he might have found the answer in the ex-staying hurdler Cyborgo.

Malone scores 25,000th point

MINNEAPOLIS (R) —

Karl Malone, his place in the Hall of Fame already secure, reached another major milestone in his illustrious career Sunday by scoring his 25,000th point in the NBA.

Malone poured in 36 points and added 11 rebounds and eight assists in leading the Utah Jazz to a 115-106 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Malone became the 11th player in NBA history to reach the 25,000-point plateau following a layup with 5:53 left in the third quarter.

"In the second half, I knew I had 24 points," Malone said. "Then I was on the (fast) break and I knew that was it. I just wanted to make it," he said of the milestone bucket.

"I would have preferred to get 25,000 at home. I am glad to get it over with," he said.

John Stockton, who will be reunited with Malone in the Hall of Fame some day, added 26 points and nine assists for Utah, which has won five in a row and 14 of its last 16.

"Malone and Stockton, that's the amazing thing about them," said Minnesota coach Flip Saunders. "They've missed six games in five years."

In New York, Patrick Ewing scored 32 points, including a jumper with 7.7 seconds left that sealed the Knicks' seventh straight victory, a 97-93 triumph over the Chicago Bulls.

Ewing also grabbed 14 rebounds in a dominating performance meant to send a pre-playoff message to the defending NBA champions, who suffered only their eighth loss of the season.

Michael Jordan, who scored 36 points, made a pair of jumpers to pull Chicago within 95-93 with 29 seconds left. Ewing then took a pass on the left side and banked home the 15-foot clinching basket over veteran centre Robert Parish.

In Phoenix, Wesley Person came off the bench to score 18 of his 31 points in the second quarter as the Suns trounced the Orlando Magic 121-85.

Person hit 12-of-17 shots overall, including seven three pointers. Cedric Ceballos had 23 points and nine rebounds and Kevin Johnson added 19 points and 13 assists as six players scored in double figures for the Suns.

The 36-point defeat was the worst of the season for the Magic, who were led by Penny Hardaway's 19 points.

In Boston, the Atlanta Hawks scored the first 19 points of the game and rolled to a 114-90 rout of the Celtics.

The loss was the 17th in 18 games for the Celtics (12-50), who are virtually assured their worst ever record in an 82-game season.

Steve Smith led a balanced Hawks attack with 17 points. Todd Day scored a game-high 33 points for Boston.

In Charlotte, Glen Rice scored 21 points and Vlade Divac added 20 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Hornets to their fifth straight win, a 82-76 victory over the Miami Heat.

Anthony Mason chipped in 17 points, 14 rebounds and seven assists for



Seattle SuperSonics Shawn Kemp (L) blocks Portland Trail Blazer Isaiah Rider (34) as Sonics Jim McIlvaine (#22) defends, during their NBA game (Reuters photo)



New York Knicks' centre Patrick Ewing celebrates his two point shot that sealed the Knicks' 97-93 win over the Chicago Bulls in the fourth period of their NBA game at New York's Madison Square Garden (Reuters photo)

Charlotte, which led by 25 rebounds and Eddie Johnson added 17 off the bench as the Houston Rockets beat the Mavericks 88-83.

Matt Maloney chipped in 15 points and seven assists, while Hakeem Olajuwon had 12 points and 12 rebounds for Houston, winners of five in a row and seven of its last eight games.

Michael Finley had 24 points for Dallas.

In Portland, Isaiah Rider scored 25 points and Gary Trent added 23 to lead the Trail Blazers to a 103-93 win over the Seattle SuperSonics, extending their winning streak to six.

Hersey Hawkins led Seattle with 29 points. The loss was only the third in the last 13 games for Seattle.

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Elden Campbell added 15 points for Los Angeles and Byron Scott chipped in 13 off the bench.

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Price, Sprewell and Chris Mullin each hit a pair of free throws in the final 80 seconds as the Warriors used a 6-0 run to overcome a 97-96 deficit.

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Golf course, zoo among new plans to develop facilities at Hussein Youth City

By Tanya Habjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Plans to further develop the Hussein Youth City (HYC) into a comprehensive family centre with a myriad of new facilities were showcased yesterday by HYC Director Ma'moun Nureddin.

Currently the most comprehensive complex in the country with professional basketball, squash, tennis courts, and soccer stadium, the new plan calls for the development of its eastern area into a family park that would attract more Jordanians as well as international visitors.

The conceptual plan calls for the establishment of a polo track, mini golf course, youth hostel, hotel, theatre, zoo, parks, and a variety of restaurants.

According to Mr. Nureddin, the idea first surfaced two months ago when Minister of Youth Mohammad Daoudieh visited the centre and "asked me to find a new way to develop the

Youth City so families would enjoy themselves."

If all goes according to plan, the Ministry of Youth will establish its base at the HYC, alongside a new Sports Federations Centre, Mr. Nureddin said.

Since funding has not yet been secured Mr. Nureddin pointed out that the Ministry of Youth will appeal to the Prime Minister and other officials to finance the plan.

"If you want to support the youth, you must be willing to fund their activities," Mr. Nureddin added.

The past year has witnessed the development of two new restaurants within the HYC, the refurbishing of its Olympic size swimming pool, and a new locker and shower room, the director said.

"Our main goal now is to find a way to raise the money through some fundraising activities and move forward one step at a time," Mr. Nureddin concluded.

Philippoussis captures Scottsdale title

SCOTTSDALE (R) — Rising Australian star Mark Philippoussis satisfied his hunger to win Sunday, powering his way to his second career title on the ATP tour and joining the millionaires' club in the process.

The big-serving 20-year-old Philippoussis out-slugged eighth-seeded American Richey Reneberg 6-4 7-6 to win the Scottsdale event and pick up \$43,000, a check that pushed his career tournament winnings past the \$1 million mark in just his third year as a professional.

"Everything about tennis is about these moments," Philippoussis said. "Playing on Sunday in front of a big crowd and holding up the trophy at the end of the day, that's what it's all about."

The unseeded Philippoussis, who belted the world's fastest serve in Friday's quarter-finals at 142 mph (228.5 kph), rocketed 13 aces past Reneberg Sunday.

He also came up with blistering groundstrokes to wear down the 29th-ranked American during the 91-minute match.

"He's obviously a difficult guy to play against. At times you don't get a lot of rhythm," said Reneberg, who earned \$25,300 as runner-up.

Philippoussis is expected to rise from 42nd in the world to the low 30s when new rankings are issued. Reneberg thinks he has the weapons to go much higher.

"Once he puts it together, there's no question he can be top 10 definitely, maybe top five," Reneberg predicted.

"He has phenomenal ability and tonnes of talent," Reneberg continued. "Anytime you have a serve like that, it's a huge advantage these days. His second serve is one of the best in the game, and when he's on his forehand is as good as anyone."

Philippoussis captured the first set with a decisive service break in the ninth game, breaking Reneberg at love before serving out the set.

The American jumped out to a 5-2 lead in the second set. But he failed to push the match to a third set by squandering three set points on Philippoussis's serve and another on his own in the following game.

That left the Australian needing only to hold serve to force a tiebreaker. "I was down in the second set and didn't really want to go to three," Philippoussis admitted. "I wasn't feeling great out there today but I just bung in there."

Philippoussis trailed 1-2 in the tie-break but caught a break when Reneberg blew a high open-court forehand volley.

At match point Philippoussis unleashed a huge service winner to claim the title.

"I didn't play unbelievably but I played great when I had to in tight situations," he said.

"I was hungry to win."

World Indoor Athletics Championships U.S. tops medals table as Kipketer shatters record

PARIS (R) — Wilson Kipketer finished \$100,000 richer on Sunday after shattering the World indoor 800 metres record for the second time to three days at the World Indoor Championships.

The Kenyan-born Dane reduced his previous mark by more than a second to one minute 42.67 seconds and Sebastian Coe's 16-year-old world outdoor record is now clearly in danger.

For his efforts Kipketer won \$50,000 for finishing first and another \$50,000 for breaking the world record at the first championships to feature prize money.

During two action-packed hours on the final day of the three-day competition, the Russian women's team broke the six-year-old 4x400 metres record.

And 25-year-old American Stacy Dragila won the first women's pole vault title and equalled the world record in the process.

On Friday, Kipketer became the first person at any world indoor or outdoor championship to break a world record in a preliminary round.

Two days later, supremely confident and enviably relaxed, he swept to the front from the gun and moved steadily away from the field.

He covered the first lap in 24.22 seconds and the 400 in 50.22.

Kipketer said he had planned to break the record again but refused to comment on his chances of bettering Coe's outdoor mark of 1:41.73.

"I don't think about his record," Kipketer said. "I think about my job and I don't care about Sebastian Coe's record. Sebastian Coe did his job 16 years ago."

Kipketer, who has lived in Denmark since 1990, was not allowed to compete for his new country at last year's Atlanta Olympics. He won the world outdoor title in Gothenburg, Sweden, two years ago and has been ranked world number one for the past three years.

The Russian women's 4x400 relay team of Tetyana Chebykina, Svetlana Goncharenko, Olga Kotlyarova and Tat'yana Alekseyeva clocked 3:26.84 to break the six-year-old mark set in Seville by a German team anchored by Grit Breuer.

Breuer again anchored the German team, who finished third on Sunday.

"We have to think over how to share the money," commented anchorwoman Alekseyeva.

In the women's pole



American Jearl Miles-Clark (L) sprints to the finish along with Sandie Richards of Jamaica in the women's 400 metres final at the World Indoor Athletics Championships. Miles-Clark won the gold medal, Richards finished second and Helena Fuchsova of Czech Republic captured the bronze medal (Reuters photo)



Kenyan-born world 800 metres champion Wilson Kipketer of Denmark celebrates with his country's flag his new world record in the men's 800 metres final at the World Indoor Athletics Championships. Kipketer clocked 1 minute and 42.67 seconds (Reuters photo)

vault, Dragila upset Australia's world record holder Emma George who failed at both 4.40 metres and 4.45.

Dragila equalled George's world record of 4.40 and made three creditable attempts to increase the mark to 4.45.

"I surprised myself," Dragila said. "I came here thinking about being in the top five, or maybe the top three, forty-four-year-old Russian Yekaterina Podkopayeva snatched victory from American

Mary Slaney, six years her junior, at the line in the women's 1,500 metres final.

Podkopayeva was third behind Slaney over the same distance at the inaugural Helsinki world outdoor championships in 1983.

Ethiopian Haile Gebrselassie made no contest of the men's 3,000 metres final, leaving the likes of world steeplechase champion Moses Kiptanui struggling in his wake.

Gebrselassie clocked 7:34.71, almost four seconds outside his own world record and later complained about the dry air in the Bercy stadium.

"The air was a little bit dry," he said. "Something got in my lungs, it's still hurting."

Nigerian Sunday Bada broke his own African record in the men's 400 final, overhauling Briton Jamie Baulch over the final 100 metres to win in 45.51.

Baulch, fastest in the world this year, flew around the first lap on the tight Bercy track in 21.30 but paid the price in the second half of the race when he was unable to hold off the long-striding Nigerian, second in both the last two world indoors.

"The last two times I led from the start," Bada said. "This time I was going to watch. With 50 metres to go I knew I was going to edge him (Baulch) out."

A bruising women's race went to the 1993 outdoor world champion Jearl Miles-Clark of the United States in 50.96 seconds, fastest in the world this year.

The first lap featured some pushing and shoving and a cameraman nearly came to grief at the first curve on the second lap when he was slow to leave as the runners thundered past.

Mozambique's Maria Mutola, the 1993 and 1995 champion, won the women's 800 metres, proving too powerful over the final lap for her rivals.

Mutola, wearing a black ribbon in memory of her father who died in a car crash last month, clocked 1:58.96. The United States finished top of the medals table with six gold medals. Cuba and Russia gathered three apiece.

Europe's league leaders have bad weekend

LONDON (R) — The league leaders in Italy, France and the Netherlands were all held to goalless draws while Manchester United and Bayern Munich both lost.

Juventus, Monaco and PSV Eindhoven remained top of their respective leagues despite their setbacks, along with United. But Bayern slipped to second on goal difference behind Borussia Dortmund. In Spain, Barcelona cruised to victory, while leaders Real Madrid play on Monday.

Following is a summary of action from the top leagues in Europe this weekend:

England

Middlesbrough, Chelsea, Wimbledon and Second Division Chesterfield progressed to the semifinals of the F.A. Cup. Chesterfield, who beat Wrexham 1-0 in Sunday's quarter-finals, will face Middlesbrough while the two London clubs meet in the other semifinal after Chelsea beat Portsmouth 4-1 and Wimbledon defeated Sheffield Wednesday 2-0.

In the league, Manchester United's hopes of extending their lead were dashed when they lost 2-1 at Sunderland — their first league defeat since November 2.

Dennis Bergkamp scored both goals as Arsenal beat Nottingham Forest 2-0 to close the gap on United to three points. Third-placed Liverpool were due to host Newcastle on Monday.

Italy

Alen Boksic was sent off on his return to Serie A after a two-month lay-off but 10-man Juventus still held title rivals Internazionale 0-0 at the San Siro. Second-placed Parma cut the Juventus lead to five points by winning 2-1 at Perugia.

Croatian forward Boksic was dismissed in the 77th minute for striking inter defender Massimo Paganin just 10 minutes after coming on as a substitute.

Sampdoria's faltering title challenge suffered a devastat-



Wimbledon soccer star Kenny Cunningham (L) tackles Sheffield Wednesday's Ian Nolan (Reuters photo)

tating 4-0 blow at Atalanta. Napoli fans greeted AC Milan coach Arrigo Sacchi by throwing a black rubbish bag on to the pitch. The gesture summed up Milan's visit fittingly — a dull scoreless draw which left the champions languishing in 12th place without an away win in 1997.

Germany

Bayern Munich's suffered a calamitous 5-2 defeat at Bayer Leverkusen on Sunday enabling Borussia Dortmund, who won 2-1 at bottom club Freiburg, to finish the weekend top of the table.

Leverkusen, who were involved in an intense battle to avoid relegation last season, hit three goals in the first half. Bayern made a comeback in the second half with goals from Christian Nerlinger and Mario Basler before Leverkusen scored twice more to seal victory.

Bayern, who started the weekend with a three-point lead over Dortmund, were left level on points and have slipped to second because of an inferior goal difference.

Leverkusen's victory left them third, just two points behind.

France

Monaco's lead was cut to four points on Sunday as Paris St. Germain, scoring twice in the last three minutes, came from behind to beat 10-man Lyon 3-1 for their first home win in four months.

PSG captain Rai scored twice, heading the crucial equaliser two minutes into the second half from a corner by fellow Brazilian Leonardo. Striker Cedric Bardon had put Lyon ahead.

France striker Patrice Loko gave PSG the lead in the 87th minute and Rai added the third a minute later.

Leaders Monaco dropped two points when they were held 0-0 at home by defending champions Auxerre but maintained the only undefeated home record in the top flight this season.

Nantes beat 10-man Bastia 3-0 at home on Saturday to extend their unbeaten run to 21 matches.

Netherlands

Feyenoord Rotterdam and PSV Eindhoven played out a tense 0-0 draw in Rotterdam on Sunday, leaving PSV still three points clear in the Dutch league with 10 matches to play.

An understrength PSV left Feyenoord's De Kuip stadium the more satisfied, but the match extended Feyenoord's unbeaten home record against PSV to 11 matches.

Ajax beat Utrecht 1-0 and are fourth.

Spain

Alfonso Perez completed a brilliant hat-trick in injury time as Real Betis staged a 3-2 win over Spanish champions Atletico Madrid on Sunday, a result which keeps up the pressure on Barcelona, 3-0 winners over Compostela.

Zaragoza's 2-2 draw with Athletic Bilbao was marred by an injury to their Austrian goalkeeper Otto Konrad caused by a firework thrown from the stands. Konrad was taken to hospital, but despite the initial scare had not suffered serious burns.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMMAM HIRSH
OF THE Tammam Media Service, Inc.

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠ 10 6 4 ♠ Q J 9 8 5 4 3 2 ♦ 7 3
Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What action do you take?

Q. 2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠ 10 8 7 6 ♠ Q A ♠ 6 5 4 3 2 ♦ 10 9 8
Partner opens the bidding with one club. What do you respond?

Q. 3 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠ A Q 8 5 5 ♠ Q J 5 ♠ A Q ♠ K Q 7
The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ Pass 2♣ Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 4 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ K Q 10 9 8 ♠ 5 4 3 2 ♠ A Q 10 8

The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♣ Pass 1♠ Pass 2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 5 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ A 7 5 ♠ K Q 8 3 ♠ Q 10 8 6 5 4 6

The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ Pass 2♣ Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 6 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠ K 10 7 ♠ 5 4 3 2 ♠ K Q 4 3 ♠ J 10 2
Partner opens the bidding with two no trump. What do you respond?

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EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Canadian Government is interested in entering into a residential lease with a Jordanian company or firm wishing to construct a build-to-suit Villa of 520.0 m² in gross area, on a parcel of land averaging 2,000.0 m² to be situated in Abdoun, Al-Diyar or Al-Swaifiyah which will serve as the new Canadian Official Residence in Amman, Jordan.

Interested parties are asked to contact the Canadian Embassy at the Pearl of Shmeisani Building (4th Floor) Shmeisani, Amman between the hours of 10:00 and 15:00 to obtain a free copy of a briefing document explaining the basic requirements expected for the new Villa.

Expressions of interest should be received at the Canadian Embassy by no later than 15:00 on the 27th day of March, 1997.

NOTICE CORRECTION

From Delegation of the European Commission - Amman

We refer to our advertisement of yesterday please note that the final date for:

1- Receipt of requests to participate is 17/3/1997.

2- Dispatch of invitations to tender is 20/5/1997.

2 children, Israeli soldier injured in Lebanon

MARIJAYOUN, Lebanon (Agencies) — Two Lebanese children and an Israeli soldier were wounded on Monday when a car bomb exploded in South Lebanon, pro-Israeli militia sources said.

A guerrilla detonated the blast by remote control as an Israeli patrol drove past on the Houla-Margaba road in the central sector of Israel's South Lebanon occupation zone, the sources said.

Moments before, Israeli soldiers saw a man get out of the car after parking beside a house at the roadside, they added.

The house was badly damaged and two children inside were moderately wounded. The Israeli was seriously wounded and was taken to hospital in Israel.

The attack brought to 23 the number of Israeli soldiers wounded in guerrilla attacks since the beginning of the year. Five soldiers have been killed.

No group claimed responsibility for the attack. In Beirut, a spokesman for Hizbollah whose guerrillas are fighting to oust Israeli soldiers from South Lebanon said he had no information on the attack.

On Sunday an Israeli soldier was wounded in a Hizbollah rocket attack inside the Israeli occupation zone.

A number of Israeli helicopters were seen hovering over the site following Monday's blast and Israeli artillery bombarded the villages of Shaqra, Majdal Selm and Wadi Al Qusabi, Lebanese security sources said.

Two Lebanese police officers were wounded on Monday when a mine blew up under their vehicle in southern Lebanon, police said.

The blast occurred on a road in the Israeli "security zone" in southern Lebanon controlled by the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia, police said.

Police said it was not immediately clear if the mine had been recently laid or if it dated from the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.



PALESTINIAN PROTEST: Palestinian female students from the Hamas movement hold their flags during a gathering in Hebron University on Monday to protest the Israeli government's decision to close four Palestinian institutions in Arab East Jerusalem. Israeli police delayed the closure after the intervention of Jawad Bulo, a Palestinian lawyer (AFP photo)

Mubarak hails Clinton as vital for peace in Mideast

WASHINGTON (AP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak called on President Bill Clinton to use his influence to broaden peace-making in the Middle East.

As the two leaders met at the White House, the Arab World was still stung by a U.S. veto of a U.N. resolution to condemn a new Israeli project in Arab East Jerusalem. And the Palestinians rejected a proposed Israeli pullback from the West Bank as inadequate.

"The president is a full partner in the peace process," Mr. Mubarak said. "Without the United States it would be very difficult to continue the peace process."

Mr. Mubarak had said on Sunday that the United States lost some credibility in the Arab World when it vetoed a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning Israel's plan to erect the project in Arab East Jerusalem.

But at the White House the Egyptian leader said the United States remained deeply involved in the Middle East peace effort and was "making tremendous efforts for the process to continue." He thanked Mr. Clinton as they posed

Mubarak says he 'persuaded' Arafat not to move to Cairo

EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT Hosni Mubarak recently persuaded Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat not to leave Gaza and move to Cairo out of anger at Israel's positions in the peace process, according to an interview.

Mr. Mubarak, interviewed last month in Cairo by the New York based publication "Israel Policy Papers," also complained of a lack of trust between Egypt and the United States and said he will not visit Israel in the near future. The interview was published March 5, ahead of Mr. Mubarak's visit to the White House on Monday.

"Egypt could help the process, but they (the Americans and Israelis) keep bluffing me," Mr. Mubarak said. "Trust between leaders means speaking frankly with each other, not bluffing."

Speaking about the U.S.-brokered agreement on the Israeli redeployment from Hebron, Mr. Mubarak maintained that he helped keep Mr. Arafat at the negotiating table during the talks' most difficult hours.

"He was so discouraged that he threatened to leave Gaza and not go back," Mr. Mubarak said of Mr. Arafat. "He wanted to come and live in Cairo."

"And again when he heard about the settlements, he wanted to leave Gaza and come and stay here. If he left, the whole process would collapse. So our job was to get him to go back and we did," the Egyptian leader said.

for pictures for his efforts.

Mr. Mubarak said earlier he planned to ask Mr. Clinton to "persuade the Israelis to understand the realities of the situation in the future," that creation of such new Jewish settlement could "explode the whole peace process."

The United States is

Rivals draw up plan to topple Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu scrambled Monday to put down a fresh challenge from disillusioned right-wing allies in parliament who say they have a new strategy to topple the embattled head of government.

Mr. Netanyahu met with leaders of the seven parties in his right-wing coalition on Monday and aides said he made progress in calming a revolt which erupted over his decision last week to transfer additional West Bank territory to the Palestinians.

But opponents were confident they had a legal tactic that could bring the right-wing leader down. "I think we'll be able to replace him," said Michael Kleiner, sponsor of a bill which would change the law governing Israel's unusual system of directly electing the prime minister and make it easier to oust him.

Under legislation which first came into effect with Mr. Netanyahu's election victory last year, Israel's 120-seat parliament, the Knesset, can force new elections for both the prime minister and legislature with a simple majority of 61.

But it would take an 80-deputy majority to force new elections for prime minister without dissolving the Knesset, a margin virtually

unattainable in Israel's historically divided legislature.

Mr. Kleiner's bill would reduce the number of votes needed to oust the prime minister without forcing new parliamentary polls from 80 to 61.

Mr. Netanyahu on Sunday succeeded in quashing threats by several hardline coalition members to vote against him in a traditional motion of no confidence by threatening to ensure they would not be re-elected if new legislative polls were held, according to Israeli press reports.

Mr. Kleiner and other critics said Mr. Netanyahu could not use such tactics if their bill is passed into law.

"We have at least 15 members of the coalition who will vote for this," said Mr. Kleiner, of the Gesher Party led by Foreign Minister David Levy, adding that most supporters of the legislation would also approve a subsequent motion to oust Mr. Netanyahu.

Left-wing opposition parties led by Labour have said they would back the bill, which Mr. Kleiner said he hoped to submit by Wednesday.

The right-wing revolt erupted after Mr. Netanyahu's cabinet on Friday approved a plan to hand over a further nine per cent of the West Bank to

Palestinian control, continuing the implementation of the Oslo Peace Accords started under Israel's previous, left-wing rulers.

Seven out of 18 members of Mr. Netanyahu's cabinet voted against the redeployment, the first of three Israel must carry out by mid-1998 according to the Jan. 15 agreement with the Palestinians.

David Bar-Illan, a top advisor to Mr. Netanyahu, acknowledged that the prime minister had lost "some ground" among coalition members following the withdrawal decision but insisted he could keep the threat at bay.

"Netanyahu restored support and confidence" in meetings on Sunday with possible dissenters, Bar-Illan said, adding he expected similar success in Mr. Netanyahu's talks Monday with coalition leaders.

"I frankly feel that the ground will be regained very soon," Mr. Bar-Illan said.

The prime minister left shortly after the meetings on a three-day visit to Russia, but he left key aides behind to deal with the domestic political turmoil.

Foreign Minister Levy also cancelled a trip to the United States planned for this week due to the political situation and tensions with the Palestinians.

Egyptian cabinet split over cloning research

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's cabinet is divided over cloning research with religious officials saying it is unacceptable while the Ministry of Health says it is a scientific issue that has no bearing on Islam.

"Cloning experiments on humans are taboo and rejected by society, religion and morality," said Religious Endowments Minister Mahmoud Hamdi Zaqzouq at a meeting of the political congress of the ruling National Democratic Party.

"The issue is not up for discussion," he was quoted in Cairo newspapers on Monday as saying.

But Health Minister Ismail Salam told the congress that cloning was a purely scientific procedure that did not tamper with creation. "We are using living cells that Allah has created and that is governed by the divine rules of life," he was quoted as saying.

The controversial subject of human cloning bit the headlines last month after scientists in Scotland introduced the world to Dolly, a lamb cloned from an adult sheep.

United States President Bill Clinton has banned federally funded human cloning research and asked private scientists voluntarily to enforce a similar moratorium until government advisers have reported on the issue.

Italy has also banned the experiment and Germany called for a global ban on cloning humans and Danish scientists, working like their Scottish and Australian colleagues on cloning livestock, said they were balking experiments on cows pending a full debate on the issue.

Last week, an Islamic theologian at the prestigious Sunni Muslim Al Azhar Institute called for an end to research on cloning, saying it did not meet an Islamic requirement that the benefits outweigh the damage.

Velayati in Turkey to restore ties after row

ANKARA (Agencies) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati indicated Monday that Turkey and Iran were moving toward patching up a diplomatic row that led to the expulsion of diplomats.

"With the common sense that exists in both countries, all existing problems can be solved," Mr. Velayati told reporters here on the first high-level contact between the two countries since the dispute.

Last month, Iran asked Turkey to recall its ambassador and a consul general after Turkey expelled an Iranian diplomat who criticised a top Turkish general who called Iran a "terrorist country."

The Iranian ambassador also angered Turkey's secular establishment by speaking at a rally calling for Islamic law in Turkey.

Ambassador Mohammad Reza Bagheri left for Tehran last month after the dispute between the two countries.

Mr. Velayati arrived here to invite President Suleyman Demirel to a summit meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Tehran in December.

He was expected to convey a goodwill message from President Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Mr. Demirel sent an envoy to Iran last week with the message saying the two neighbours should not interfere in each other's domestic policies and should respect each other's security concerns.

"This message was warmly welcomed by President Rafsanjani and the Iranian authorities," Mr. Velayati told reporters.

"Both countries are determined to overcome this crisis," Mr. Velayati told reporters upon his arrival in Ankara. "The first step was made by Demirel. My visit constitutes the second political step."

He said he planned to meet with Mr. Demirel as well as Islamist Premier Necmettin Erbakan and Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller.

Mr. Erbakan has sought to boost political and economic ties with Iran's theocratic regime at the expense of angering Ankara's closest Western ally, the United States.

Washington considers Iran as a main supporter of "terrorism."

Mr. Erbakan's aides signed a multi-billion dollar agreement for Iranian natural gas for Turkey during a visit by the Turkish premier to Tehran in last August.

Khamenei: Forced marriage anti-Islamic

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's spiritual and political leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Monday blasted as "anti-Islamic" a custom among certain tribes here forcing young girls to marry men they do not love.

"This tribal tradition has nothing to do with Islam. No one has the right to impose a marriage on a girl," Ayatollah Khamenei told a large crowd of women in the southwestern city of Khorramshahr.

"Such imposed marriage is anti-Islamic," he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei, who is on a visit to the southwestern Khuzestan province, usually attacks backward practices in visits to farflung regions of the country.

Families in certain tribes, including in Khuzestan, often force their daughters to marry against their will a cousin and sometimes a

much older man.

If a girl refuses to bow, she will be ostracised by her own family or could even be killed by her father or brother to protect their honour.

Such a refusal often leads to a conflict between the two families and even bloody clashes between members of two tribes.

The authorities launched a campaign several years ago to eradicate what is called "honour killing" among certain southern tribes.

There have been many cases of young girls attempting suicide to avoid marrying men they do not love.

In February 1994, a 14-year-old girl set herself on fire and died after her parents insisted on marrying her off to a 42-year-old man.



Israeli army warns women of sexual harassment taboos

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Women serving in the Israeli army have been warned to watch out for male colleagues who wear too much after-shave or call them "doll" — they could be sexual harassers. A pamphlet published by the Israeli army says expressions such as "darling," "doll" or "what a body" are taboo and warns female recruits to beware of six male personality types whose behaviour can be construed as sexual harassment. These include "the chauvinist" who treats women as inferior and tells jokes against them, the "impulsive" incapable of controlling himself and the "father" who wants to "adopt" his female colleagues and become involved in their personal lives. Female soldiers are also warned about the "courter" who offers gifts and wears too much after-shave, the "toucher" who fondles them or strokes their hair, and the "poor guy" who seeks to attract women by asking for help or advice. Sexual harassment is regarded as a serious offence which carries various penalties including hard labour, demotion or reprimands and young female recruits have a special hotline at their disposal to report any incidents. Israeli women are obliged to do military service for 19 months but can be exempted on religious grounds.

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Ivorian penis-shrinker death toll rises

ABIDJAN (R) — Angry mobs have burned or beaten to death at least three alleged sorcerers in Ivory Coast's commercial capital Abidjan after a shrinking or disappearing penis scare spread from neighbouring Ghana. Police said all the dead were African migrants lynched by mobs on Thursday. Interior Minister Emile Constant Bombet, interviewed on state television's main evening news programme late on Friday, appealed for calm, telling Ivorians that the problem existed only in their minds. Such reports are not uncommon in West or Central Africa.

Purported victims often blame handshakes with sorcerers. At least 12 men were killed in Ghana in January by mobs accusing them of making penises shrink or vanish. Police in Ghana and Ivory Coast dismiss the phenomenon as a ploy by thieves to cause a crowd to form and then rob people. Some victims say sorcerers touch them and make their penises to shrink or vanish to extort cash in return for a cure.

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Drug raid nets kidnappers next door

NEW YORK (R) — Seven people allegedly involved in the kidnapping, rape and torture of a woman were arrested after they jumped out a window on the night taken belief a drug raid next door was meant for them, police said on Saturday. Police said they had a warrant for apartment 21 at an address in Harlem and successfully arrested six people there on Friday. But officers outside the building noticed people jumping from apartment 22A, which was on the second floor, and went to investigate. Inside they found a woman who was bound and with burns over portions of her body, police spokesman Arek Tarh said. She told police she had been kidnapped three days earlier and had been sexually assaulted by her captors. One of the women jumping from apartment 22A was hospitalised in good condition with injuries sustained in the fall.

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Gulf papers condemn U.S. veto at U.N.

DUBAI (AFP) — Gulf newspapers on Monday condemned the U.S. veto of a U.N. resolution calling for a halt to Israel's settlement policy in Arab East Jerusalem and urged Arab countries to take a firmer stand against Washington.

"The last veto has really showed that Washington is not a neutral co-sponsor of the peace process, but is actually an ally of Israel," the Saudi newspaper Al Madina said.

The U.S. veto on Friday blocked a European-sponsored U.N. Security Council resolution criticising Israel over its plans to build a new Jewish Settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

The Qatari newspaper Al Watan said the U.S. veto could have been foreseen because of the lack of cohesive Arab pressure and strong differences between Arab countries.

"Any Arab reaction must be collective, unified and coordinated to prevent the Americans from playing on differences" between the Arab countries, it said, adding that the problem essentially resulted from Arab weakness.

The United Arab Emirates newspaper Al Itihad called for Arabs to adopt a unified stance against the United States.

"After the American veto, Arabs are urged to review their relations with the United States, which has given itself the right to ignore resolutions voted on by the United Nations," Al Itihad said.

After Friday's veto, the U.N.'s Arab group asked the U.N. general assembly to call an emergency session on Israel's settlement policy in Arab East Jerusalem.

Yemen hints at arbitration in border row

SANAA (R) — Yemen has hinted it might resort to international arbitration if more than a year of talks with Saudi Arabia fail to settle a 60-year-old border dispute.

Yemen's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdul Karim Al Iryani told the Mithaq weekly published on Monday that the border issue was highly complicated.

"I think the longer a solution is delayed the more difficulties will arise," he added.

"If the two sides do not reach a solution then the only option is the known legal one," he said in reference to international arbitration.

Yemen and Saudi Arabia had several minor clashes in a potentially oil and gas-rich border area before they signed in 1995 a memorandum of understanding to resolve the row and set up a committee to demarcate the land and sea borders.

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh had in the summer complained that the committee was making slow progress and called for a summit with Saudi Arabia to speed up the talks.

Deal to free German captives in Yemen reported to be close

SANAA (AFP) — Armed tribesmen holding seven German tourists hostage in the mountains of south Yemen have agreed to set their captives free, the tourists' travel agent said here Monday.

"The kidnappers told a mediator they agree to free the tourists," Mohammad Ali, director of the Al Khalifa travel agency, told AFP.

"They did not want to set a date for the liberation, they said they wanted to prepare their getaway so as to avoid any problems" with security forces surrounding their hideaway in the Wadi Massila region of Hadramut province, he said.

Mr. Ali said he obtained his information from the security services, but Yemeni officials refused to confirm or deny whether a deal had been struck.

A tribal mediator, appointed at the end of a meeting between tribal chieftains and the governor of Hadramut province, made contact with the kidnappers on Sunday without success, a provincial official told AFP.

The seven German men, who were touring the region by motorbike, were snatched by around 50 armed men last Monday near the town of Tarim, around 750 kilometres southeast of Sanaa.

The kidnappers are demanding between \$7 and \$12 million from the Yemeni government as compensation for money swindled from their tribe by a car trafficker.

Mr. Ali said no ransom would be paid, but that the authorities had agreed to track down and arrest the alleged trafficker —

Mohammad Bahdila. Bahdila bought the cars on credit from the tribes and never paid for them. He was arrested by police but then escaped, and the tribes believe the authorities helped him, police sources said.

Mr. Ali said the tribal negotiator was continuing contacts on Monday with the kidnappers, who bail from Maara province which borders Oman.

At the weekend, the Yemeni government dispatched large security service reinforcements backed by helicopters to surround the tribesmen's stronghold in a bid to put pressure on the kidnappers.

Around 80 foreigners have been kidnapped by Yemeni tribes since 1993 and all have been freed unharmed, but they are usually used as bargaining chips to obtain concessions from the government.

Diplomats here said this was the first time the tribes had demanded a ransom, leading to fears the kidnapping may have purely criminal motives.